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# NATAL SERMONS.

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Second Series

OF

DISCOURSES

PREACHED IN

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S,  
MARITZBURG.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. JOHN WILLIAM COLENZO, D.D.,  
BISHOP OF NATAL.

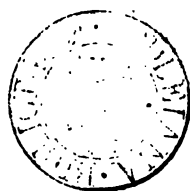
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# SERMONS.

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## I.

### ON THE PERSONALITY OF EVIL.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 4, 1866.

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LUKE XI. 24.

'WHEN THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT IS GONE OUT OF A MAN, HE WALKETH THROUGH DRY PLACES, SEEKING REST; AND, FINDING NONE, HE SAITH, I WILL RETURN UNTO MY HOUSE, WHENCE I CAME OUT. AND, WHEN HE COMETH, HE FINDETH IT SWEEPED AND GARNISHED. THEN, GOETH HE, AND TAKETH TO HIM SEVEN OTHER SPIRITS MORE WICKED THAN HIMSELF, AND THEY ENTER IN, AND DWELL THERE; AND THE LAST STATE OF THAT MAN IS WORSE THAN THE FIRST.'

WE read that, when our Lord had spoken these words,—  
'a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.'

The words of the great Teacher had evidently reached the heart of that woman. She felt that they were true and living words, such as no common man could speak. They had told her of that which was passing within her; they had appealed to her own conscience,—perhaps, to her own experience, to her own sense of sin and of its bitter consequences; they had opened up to her the secrets of her own hidden spiritual life. Whether she gave heed to those words, or not, they had brought a message from God to her soul; and she breaks forth involuntarily into expressions of admiration for the wisdom and power of him who uttered them.

Our Lord, however, who knew what was in man, soon checked such utterances. He sought not his own in the



world, he cared not for human applause or censure. He sought only God's glory, and the truest good of men; and he turned at once her thoughts, and the thoughts of others like her in the crowd, into a different channel when he said,—

‘Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it!’

May this blessedness be ours! We hear the Word of God, indeed, abundantly. That which prophets and kings of old desired to see of God's Goodness, and have died without seeing, we see from our very childhood. That which multitudes of living men throughout the world are longing for, in the secret desires of their souls, though they know not what is the true cause of their spirit's craving, we enjoy to the full, by the free gift of God, in the knowledge of His Love, and the glad tidings of the Gospel of Grace. And we have not only heard with our outward ears, but doubtless, in some measure or other, God himself has conveyed His Word to our hearts; we have heard it with our spirit's ears, and have thus become responsible for hearing it. May we keep that Word which our Father speaks to us,—feed daily on the living bread, which He supplies to us, as the token of His Fatherly Presence with us,—and grow thereby more true and faithful in our work on earth, more conformed unto His Image, more ‘meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’

We have here, in this text, another passage brought before us by our Church, as the Gospel of the day, which stands evidently in very close connection with the subject of last Sunday. I have not chosen these subjects for myself: but they are pressed upon us, by the order of our Church, as specially fitted for our consideration in this season of Lent, as suited for *all* of you, for the babes in faith, as well as for the men in understanding, for the weak and feeble, as well as the lusty and strong. And therefore I do not think it right to evade this Sunday, any more than the last, the questions which are thus raised. The mere reading of the passage from the Holy Table must make *some* impression upon the mind of the hearer, must leave behind *some* kind of feeling with respect to it; and it is only right that the true bearing of its contents upon our religious life of to-day should be set before you, and the

true lessons derived from it, which it contains for our warning and guidance.

Most probably, the words before us were intended primarily to represent directly the case of the Jewish Nation. The Evil Spirit, which once possessed them, when they rebelled against their Divine King, and gave themselves up to all manner of idolatrous practices, seemed for a time to have gone out of them. Ever since the period of the Babylonish Captivity, that sore and heavy judgment which at length struck terror into their consciences, they never appear to have fallen away again into the sin of open idolatry. In this they may have been influenced, not only by the warnings of their own great prophets, but by the example of their Persian masters, and their contact with the principles of the Zoroastrian religion, in which *fire*, indeed, was revered as the symbol of the Divine Being, but all idolatrous images were strenuously abhorred. Moreover, the great body of the Jews did not return from the exile, but only those, for the most part, whose hearts were touched by the desire—not only to return to their own land, but—to serve, with greater zeal and faithfulness than of old, Jehovah, the God of their fathers. Those, who were *indifferent*, who were wanting in patriotic and religious spirit—and especially those who were addicted to idolatry,—who still in Egypt ‘burnt incense to the Queen of Heaven,’ Jer.xliv.15—28, and by the waters of Babylon ‘set up their idols in their hearts,’ Ez.xiv.4,—most probably did not care to return from the places where they had settled down among the heathen.

However this may be, certain it is that, whatever other sins the Jews committed after their return from the Captivity, they no longer worshipped idols. No human sacrifices were now offered to the Sun-God, the Baal, or Lord, of the tribes of Canaan, as Jeremiah tells us they were offered in his time:—

‘They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to *burn their sons and their daughters in the fire*,—which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.’ Jer. vii.31.

‘They have built also the high places of the Baal, to *burn their sons with fire as burnt-offerings* unto the Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.’ Jer.xix.5.

No ‘abominations,’ that is, indecent symbols, were now

set up in the very Temple of Jehovah, nor impure rites performed in his worship, as we learn from Jeremiah, and from the Deuteronomist who wrote in very nearly, if not quite, the same age as Jeremiah, was actually the case in the time of king Josiah, just before the Captivity.

'The children of Israel have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord; they have set their abominations in the House which is called by my Name, to pollute it.' Jer.viii.30; see also D.xxiii.17,18, 2K.xxiii.7.

In the times of the Maccabees, of which some account is given in the apocryphal books bound up in our larger Bibles, the Jews endured nobly great sufferings on account of their religion, from those who attempted to force them to comply with idolatrous ceremonies. And in the days of our Lord himself there was a very great general outward show of religion throughout the land. There was the temple at Jerusalem crowded with hosts of worshippers at the three great Festivals: there was the synagogue in every town and village, in which the Law was read and expounded continually. There were professors of religion, talking loudly, and making great display of their prayers and fastings,—Pharisees, who stopped in the corners of the streets, to perform their devotions in the sight of men, and Scribes, who could repeat whole passages of Scripture by heart, and set forth the minute directions of their ritual with the most scrupulous accuracy. Verily, 'the house was swept and garnished.' But the Spirit of God was not there in possession of it. When brought low by their afflictions, and made to reflect upon their former national sins, they had not truly humbled themselves before God, and besought of Him that cleansing grace, which should prepare their hearts to be the abode of His Indwelling Spirit. They had only put away some outward forms of sin; the root of the matter was still there; a stubborn, proud, self-righteous heart was the heart of this people still, even as it was in the days of old, when the Deuteronomist wrote of them:—

'They have corrupted themselves: their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.' xxxii.5.

And so, in the language of the text, the 'unclean spirit' returned with sevenfold power to possess and rule them for his own. Their religion became, too commonly, hypocrisy,—their prayers, formalities,—their thanksgivings, the

expression of an arrogant, boastful self-confidence—‘God ! I thank thee that I am not as other men are,’—instead of a grateful, loving, outpouring of the soul by men, rejoicing meekly in the gifts of God’s Love, and longing to share them as freely as possible with others. They indulged in heart the same evil thoughts as before, but with a cloak now of religious pretence. As in the time of old, when the Psalmist wrote,—

‘Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips ; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood,’—

so it was in the days of Christ ; only now their wickedness was intensified by the fact, that they had far more abundant light,—that they professed all the while a zeal for God’s honour,—they prided themselves on knowing His Will,—they made their boast of being taught by the Law. But their true state of mind had just been signally evidenced, when they had looked upon that holy and loving one, had heard him speak his words of Truth, had witnessed his pure and innocent life, and yet had the hardihood to ascribe his acts to the spirit of evil :—

‘He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils.’

Men, who could do this, must indeed have been very far gone in wickedness. This was even to blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, of whose presence and aid ‘without measure’ in his ministry those gracious words were continually witnessing. The ‘last state’ truly of that people was ‘worse than the first.’

Such appears to be the sense, in which these words were originally spoken, as we gather it from the connection in which they stand, and especially from the clause added in Matt.xii.45,—

‘Even so shall it be also unto this *wicked generation.*’

But let us now examine more closely the expressions here employed. We are told at the beginning of the passage—

‘Jesus was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake, and the people wondered.’

We have here, then, an instance of the kind which I referred to last Sunday ; where, in the language and mode of thought of that age, a person, merely afflicted with dumbness, was said to be possessed with a devil. No doubt, our great Divines, at the time of the Reformation and after-

wards, by whom our present Liturgy was prepared, believed fully, many of them, like Bishop Hall, in the reality of demoniacal possession. And so they have expressly introduced these passages in the Gospels for the first three Sundays in Lent. But all this has now passed away. No one nowadays, as I observed last Sunday, takes a deaf or dumb child, a blind person or a paralytic, or even a lunatic or a maniac, to a priest, to have the demon exorcised. We have recourse at once to the physician. And so, in one of our colonial journals of the past week you may have seen a short extract from an article which appeared in a recent number of the *Monde*, the French ultramontane or papal organ, as follows :—

Satan is the sole author of all evil that happens on the earth. All diseases, all disorders in nature, all epidemics, droughts, inundations, famines,—all miseries, pains, sufferings, death,—in short, all evil is the work of the devil. One of the greatest evils of the present time is, that *in practice, at least, no one believes in the devil*. The monster has his own way, with victims who refuse to believe in the existence of the tormentor.

This charge or statement is perfectly true, that ‘in practice, at least, no one believes in the devil.’ Men, indeed, often speak about ‘the devil,’ as they speak about ‘the world’ and ‘the flesh,’ personifying in this way certain forms of evil, and discriminating different classes of sins. And it may still be at times convenient to do so: as St Paul speaks of men ‘receiving the spirit of *the world*,’ of their ‘being conformed to *this world*,’ of ‘*the flesh* lusting against the spirit,’ of our ‘crucifying *the flesh*.’ But no one supposes that ‘the world’ and ‘the flesh’ are real *persons*, by whom living men are tempted, with whom they have to struggle, by whom they may be overcome and possessed: nor do we in these days believe in ‘the devil,’ as the ‘author of all evil’—

of all diseases, all disorders in nature, all epidemics, droughts, inundations, famines,—all miseries, pains, sufferings, death.

These expressions do but serve to represent to us, in a definite compact form, certain classes of sins; and they also remind us that we are bound to resist those sins, with the same resolution and firmness, *as if they were really personal enemies*—to ‘overcome the world,’ to ‘crucify the flesh,’ to ‘resist the devil,’ to ‘fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.’

The good Bishop Hall, indeed, fully believed that storms and earthquakes, floods and avalanches, sickness and death,—all that to our blind eyes appears ‘disorder’ in nature,—were due to ‘the devil.’ But Bishop Hall lived long before the days when Geology had shown such ‘disorders’ and ‘convulsion’ in nature, together with pain and suffering, disease and death, were in the world ages before the first man sinned,—that beasts and birds of prey, ravenous fishes and reptiles, lived then, as now, by devouring other living creatures,—that the bones of one animal are to be found within the body of another,—that creatures of all kinds died then, as they die now, overwhelmed by floods, or falling masses, or the fiery streams poured out by volcanoes,—that, in other cases, diseased, carious bones show very plainly that in those primeval times the brute animals suffered pain, as well as death.

But the Roman-Catholic writer just quoted is still living—is living, therefore, in the midst of Modern Science, and either must have shut his eyes to that light, and ignored the facts which Geology teaches, or else he must have some way of his own for explaining these difficulties. It may be said, for instance,—it has actually been said,—that the fall of the angel-host took place, perhaps, in that unknown interval of time—the ‘chasm,’ as one (Dr Pusey) calls it,—which is supposed by some to separate the statement made in the *first* verse of Genesis from that made in the *second*. During that interval, or perhaps even before it, pride and presumption entered into heaven, and the angels fell, and became transformed to devils; and then began their rage and malicious efforts against the good Creator and His Works. As one has written (Delitzsch):—

When did evil enter into the creation? Not first *after* the six days’ work,—for the remains of animals and plants of the old world, ever coming before our eyes in greater number and variety, are acknowledged to be older than the origin of Man; [and these remains, says this writer, an eminent critic, who strives to the utmost to maintain the traditionary view, must be the remains of animals and plants, that had been corrupted and destroyed by ‘demoniacal powers,’] nor had it entered already *before* the six days’ work; for the ‘desolation and emptiness’ [of the great ‘chasm’ or chaos] contained no Mollusks or Saurians; *that* was the conglomerated mass of a world very different from a world of such creatures as these, which appear as the lowest link in the chain of development of the *present* creation.

Demoniacal powers, then, have interfered with the work in the course

of creation. . . . They stirred up the dark fiery principle of the creature, and made unnatural intermixtures, and mongrel formations, mutual murder, disease and death, common among the races of God-created animals. Thus the Divine Creation was not merely a working-out of the dark matter into a bright living form, but also a struggle with the might of evil. Whole generations, called into existence by God, yielded to the corrupting influence of that might, and must, consequently, be swept away. They were imbedded in the bowels of the mountains.

It is obvious to ask, 'For what purpose, then, were animals such as lions, and eagles, or the great primeval Saurians, made at all, with jaws, and teeth, and claws, and stomachs, fitted only for preying upon other living animals?' But for those who ascribe such wondrous power to Satan, that again and again he should have ruined and rendered abortive the work of the Blessed God,—for those who assert, as some have lately asserted, that 'the intelligence of Satan is next to Omniscience,'—it is a serious question, *when and how* did this Evil Spirit obtain such knowledge and such power? No one supposes that his knowledge 'was next to Omniscience,'—that his power was next to Omnipotence,—that he had the attribute almost of Omnipresence, so as to be tempting millions of living men and women at the same instant,—*before* his fall. No one thinks of saying that the highest archangel in the courts of heaven,—not he, of whom we read in the book of the Revelation xii.7-9—

'There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven; and the great dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him':—

no one, I say, imagines that even Michael, Satan's conqueror, is almost Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent. When, then, and by what means, did Satan, the fallen spirit, acquire these glorious attributes, 'next to' the Divine? Did he acquire them by that very sin, which shut him out from the presence of God and of Goodness? But in truth, as the French writer complains, in this day of ours, 'no one, in practice, at least, believes in the devil.' Why should we? When an old Divine was asked whether he believed in the devil, his answer was 'No! I believe in God. Do not you, my brother?' If we indeed believe

in the Ever-Blessed God, it is impossible to suppose that He will suffer an Evil Spirit,—nay, thousands and millions of evil spirits, whose power might be annihilated by a breath of his Divine Displeasure,—to haunt every corner of this habitable globe, watching for every occasion to ruin and destroy the souls of wretched men, to sink them in irremediable woe, in everlasting torments.

Of course, however, reference will be made, in support of the traditionary view, to such passages as those in the text, and our Lord's own words will be quoted as recognizing the existence of personal demons. But consider to what extent this argument will go, if it is really pressed to its necessary consequences. For our Lord in the text does not merely recognize the existence of demons,—of demoniacal possession,—of the possibility of seven evil spirits entering into one man;—but he also adopts—and by adopting sanctions—the current views of the people of his time, as to the habits of these unclean spirits, when not in possession of the spirit of man.

‘When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he *walketh through dry places, seeking rest*; and, finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.’

It was the common opinion of the Jews of that age, that demons usually, when not employed in actual mischief, wandered restlessly about in desert, uncultivated places, away from the busy haunts of men, and the signs of human progress. Thus in the book of Tobit, from which I quoted last Sunday, we are told that the demon ‘Asmodeus,’ when exorcised by Tobias, viii.4—

‘fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.’

And so, in the apocryphal book of Baruch, iv.33-35, it is threatened that the city, which ‘had rejoiced at the ruin of Jerusalem, and was glad of her fall,’ that is, Babylon, should be ‘grieved for her own desolation’—

‘for the fire shall come upon her from the Eternal, long to endure; and she shall be *inhabited of devils* a great time.’

And the same idea is repeated in the Apocalypse, xviii.2, with reference, apparently, to the city of Rome:—

‘Babylon the great is fallen, and is become *the habitation of devils*, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.’

I imagine that there are few in this day, even of those who still cling to traditionary views, who suppose that



demons really do haunt all 'dry' and desolate places—that they abound, for instance, in the Sahara or the great desert of North Central Africa, more than in other places. Our Lord's words will probably be explained metaphorically: the 'dry places' will perhaps be, as one ancient Father (Remigius) says, the 'hearts of the *heathen*'—

which are without any moisture of the waters of salvation, that is, of the Holy Scriptures and spiritual gifts,—without any infusion of the Holy Spirit:—

or, as another (Rabanus) suggests, they will be the 'hearts of the *faithful*,'—

which, having been cleared of the yielding moisture of loose thoughts, the crafty plotter tries, if he may fix his footsteps anywhere there.

But this is not the only point of this kind to be noticed in the narrative. For our Lord's words also recognize the existence of the '*chief* of the devils,' and his name 'Beelzebub,' or 'Baal-zebub.' And who was Baal-zebub? We are told in 2Ki.i.2,3,6,16; he was the God of the Philistines of Ekron. The 'Baal' or Lord of the Syrian tribes was the Sun, who was worshipped all over the land under various modifications, as the Baal of this place, and the Baal of that, 'Baal-Gad,' 'Baal-Hermon,' &c.; that is, 'Our Lord of Gad,' 'Our Lord of Hermon,' &c.; just as in Roman-Catholic countries we have the Virgin worshipped as 'Our Lady' of this place, 'Our Lady' of that. Sometimes, however, the worship of the Baal was distinguished by some quality ascribed to him, as here in the name 'Baal-zebub,' which means literally, 'Lord of flies,' and was probably given to the Baal in this case, with reference to the swarms of flies which in hot climates, like that of Palestine, often amounted to a plague, because the same deity, whose heat seemed to favour their production, was also appealed to as a help against them. For some reason or other, the Jews appear to have given this name Baalzebub to Satan in our Lord's time, and he adopts their language:

'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.'

Of course, it may be said, our Lord, though he adopts the language of the Jews, does not endorse their view as correct: and again, with reference to the unclean spirit, 'walking through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none,' it may be said, as it is by Dean Alford—

These *minor circumstances* of the illustration are merely accessory, and accommodated to the notions of the Jews, as to the haunts and habits of *demons*, who (they supposed) chiefly abode in waterless deserts, and also as to those of *demoniacs*.

But this notion of our Lord's always 'accommodating' his language to that of the people of his age,—knowing that the real state of things was entirely different from what they supposed, yet not only by his silence, but by his actual expressions, confirming them in their false impressions,—seems utterly derogatory to the dignity and truthfulness of his character. What Christian Missionary, in reasoning with a Zulu, would deliberately use language which implied that there was any truth in their notion of the spirits of the dead, when they have left the human body, entering into snakes? And, if we ourselves should shrink from such an act, which would tend to confirm them in their heathen delusions, how can we presume to ascribe to him a less keen sense of the untruthfulness of such a course of proceeding, than we should have ourselves? I repeat, I reject altogether these attempts at explanation of our Lord's words, by alleging that, though well aware of the truth on this and other points, he was constantly 'accommodating' himself to the language and modes of thought of those with whom he was speaking,—carefully hiding up in words, well chosen for the purpose, the truth which he knew,—not once only, but all his life long, suffering them to carry away from their intercourse with him false impressions on subjects, on which one word from his lips would have set them authoritatively right. I reject these explanations as dishonouring to his character,—as inconsistent with that perfect candour and truthfulness, that shone so brightly through all his ministry. It is far better to say at once that, as he grew, we are told, 'in wisdom and stature,' so he grew up, as a Son of Man, amidst the learning of the time, amidst the doctrines and modes of thought of the age, and spoke of these matters—of 'Beelzebub, the prince of the devils,' of 'casting out devils,' of the 'unclean spirit, going out of a man,' 'walking through dry places,' 'seeking rest and finding none,' 'taking with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself,' and 'entering' into his old home again,—just exactly as the most pious persons of that age would have done, in all sincerity and singleness of heart, because he

acquiesced in them. It seems to me impossible to suppose that he would have used such expressions, which could only have had the effect of mistifying and misleading his hearers, if he did not entertain the views, which the most devout held in those days, while adopting the current language of the times.

When, therefore, as here, our Lord appears to speak of 'casting out demons,' as equivalent to what we should now consider to be merely the cure of bodily or mental diseases, I cannot doubt that he spoke as a son of man, in the language and according to the modes of thought of the age in which he lived, and according to that system of Jewish theology, in which he had been trained. In some way or other even the Jews themselves of that day, as he himself tells us, professed to cast out demons:—

'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?'

We heard last Sunday an instance of this, which Josephus records as an eye-witness; and probably those Jewish exorcists affected to cure many kinds of diseases,—dumbness, deafness, blindness, paralysis, lunacy, and madness,—by casting out the devils which caused them. Thus we read, Luke ix.49,50, Mark ix.38, &c.

'And John answered and said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us."

And Jesus said unto him, "Forbid him not; for he, that is not against us, is for us."

So, again, we are told of 'certain of the wandering Jews, exorcists,' who—

'took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.' Acts xix.13.

But this follows immediately a strange account of miraculous cures, which seems to have very much of a legendary character:—

'And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick *handkerchiefs* or *aprons*, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.' v.11,12.

In Justin's time, as we heard last Sunday, there were many who affected to exercise such powers in the ancient Church. And it is impossible to say how much that passion for the marvellous and supernatural, which possessed so many of the early Christians, has affected the records,

which we find in the Gospels, of our Lord's own life and doings. In the case before us, for instance, Luke speaks only of a '*dumb spirit*':—

'He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass when this devil was gone out, the dumb spake, and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils.'

Whereas in Matthew the devil is both '*blind and dumb*':—

'Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.'

Here we have apparently the legendary spirit actively at work, and modifying the earlier account of Luke, which itself may be but legendary, based upon facts in our Lord's real life, of which we can give no very clear account, any more than we can say what the Jews really did, when they are said to have 'cast out devils,'—what the diseases were, which they thus characterized,—what means they employed for the purpose of effecting a cure, and how far they effected it.

But, however this may be, it cannot be doubted that our Lord did speak of evil spirits possessing the souls of men, as in the language of the text. And sure we may be, that while the doctrine in question, as regards the mode of thought in which it is conceived, or the form of words in which it is expressed, may belong to that particular age, and not to our own, it is yet based on some substantial reality in man's experience, which is true for all ages; and the words of the text require only to be translated into the language and thoughts of our own time, to convey to our minds a solemn lesson of Eternal Truth. I shall return this evening, if God wills, to the consideration of this question.

## II.

### ON THE PERSONALITY OF EVIL—(*continued*).

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-BURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 4, 1866.

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LUKE XI. 24.

'WHEN THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT IS GONE OUT OF A MAN, HE WALKETH THROUGH DRY PLACES, SEEKING REST; AND, FINDING NONE, HE SAITH, I WILL RETURN UNTO MY HOUSE, WHENCE I CAME OUT. AND, WHEN HE COMETH, HE FINDETH IT SWEEPED AND GARNISHED. THEN, GOETH HE, AND TAKETH TO HIM SEVEN OTHER SPIRITS MORE WICKED THAN HIMSELF, AND THEY ENTER IN, AND DWELL THERE; AND THE LAST STATE OF THAT MAN IS WORSE THAN THE FIRST.'

ALTHOUGH various expressions are reported to have fallen from the lips of our Lord, on which notions have been built in later days, as to the spirits of evil and their head and leader, Beelzebub, or Satan, or whatever other name he bore,—notions which have filled the history of the Church for many centuries with deeds, which we now look back upon with shame and sorrow,—yet these are quite alien to the general *spirit* of his teaching. That teaching distinctively, above all others, inculcates the constant presence of the Father, His care for His children, even for all His creatures,—who 'clothes the lilies,' takes account of the sparrows, numbers the very hairs of our heads,—and of whom he says, in the words immediately preceding the Gospel of to-day, from which the text is taken:—

'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.'

In such a world as this—so filled with the Divine Presence—so safe under His direction and blessing—there is no room left, in fact, for the presence of the enemy. A Providence so incomprehensibly certain, so universal, makes the idea of a rival power of evil inconceivable—im-

possible. Wickedness in itself is a *feeble* thing: evil is disorder, and is the way to dissolution. As one has well written (*Spectator*, Dec. 31, 1865):—

There is none of that *unity of plan* about evil, which there is about good. On the contrary, all evil is discordant, and points, if anywhere, to discordant sources in the spiritual world. There may be powerful reasons for believing in devils, but scarcely any in one single Devil. The reign of evil has no mark of a single presiding will . . . . The concurrence of Divine purposes, visible in the good of the universe, points clearly to one Fountain of Good: but there is no such concurrence pointing to one Fountain of Evil.

A will or spirit, therefore, so malignant as to hate God as God—as Goodness,—and possessed of knowledge and power, such as is popularly ascribed to the devil, ‘next to’ Omniscience, ‘next to’ Omnipotence, joined with what is almost Omnipresence,—and all these attributes exercised continually for the destruction of God’s work and the ruin of His creatures,—so that, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor says (*Life of Christ*, I.ix.8)—

It is the mercy of God we have the quietness of a minute, for, if the devil’s chain were taken off, he would make our very beds a torment, our tables to be a snare, our sleeps fantastic, lustful, and illusive, and every sense should have an object of delight and danger, a hyæna to kiss, and to perish in its embraces,—

such a being as this is utterly inconceivable, amidst the extended knowledge, and the sounder thought and reasoning, of the present day. And, accordingly, the powers against Man, with which this being was supposed in former ages to be armed, have been withdrawn from him one by one,—as the light of Science has penetrated farther into the secrets of nature, and the light of the religion of love, the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth, has been diffused in the heart of humanity. We no longer ascribe to his interference the occurrence of an earthquake or a thunderstorm—‘all epidemics, droughts, inundations, famines—all miseries, pain, sufferings, death.’ The ‘devil’ has long been, with most thinking persons, a mere impersonation of evil, of the promptings of the selfish nature, which conflict with the Divine Law of Love and Purity—like the vast shadow on the mountain-side, in which the bewildered traveller fails to recognize himself, but sees a supernatural and monstrous foe. There is here a dark image of the man himself: but there is no centre of darkness and of night, to be the opposite and enemy of the

radiant ruler of the day. Still the expression, 'the Devil,' or 'Satan'—like the kindred expressions, 'the world' and 'the flesh'—is a convenient theological term, and may be used more especially with reference to every tendency to transgression, which appears in the higher and more spiritual part of man's nature, and which requires spiritual remedies,—which requires faith, entire and full, in God, in His Presence, Power, and Goodness, the 'shield of faith, which is able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil.' As one has said (*Spectator*, Dec. 31, 1865):—

If there be a Devil, we are not called upon to trust, but to resist him. And so long as we resist,—and resist with that strong purpose *which personal conflict excites*,—it is of no consequence to us, human or divine, whether it be an *It* or *Him*, against whom we fight the battle of the spirit . . . If the cold thoughts, which startle us all with the notions that virtue is a dream, and man a mere creature of dark or bright necessity, as the case may be . . . if such thoughts really come from a preternatural source at all, they require no more assistance, and no other mode of dealing with them, than they would if they originated in our own nature.

We are all conscious that it is our own true self which chooses, however feebly, the right, the good, and the true; and hence every voice within or without, which suggests that we should choose and do what we know to be wrong, appears to come from some enemy, from some extraneous source. It is meant by our Creator that our souls, in their progress towards God, should struggle on through difficulties,—through opposing elements,—through pleasures, or perhaps pains, whether of body or of mind. But instead of looking on these as the baits and snares of the Tempter, the cunning contrivances of a malicious spirit, labouring and plotting continually for our ruin, let us rather regard them as the discipline, wise, yet kind, of a Father, who wills our perfection,—that moral and spiritual perfection, which not even Omnipotence itself can bestow unconditionally, because, it is the perfection of a spirit, of a will, and not of a mere living organism. That struggle, indeed, is hard enough, and the ascent of the Mount of God is steep enough, as our souls know full well, without a hand stretched out from the abyss to drag us down. We need the Arm Divine to lean upon continually, our Father's Hand to hold us up, lest our faint earthly hearts should yield, our weak mortal feet bend under us. If a spirit of

evil interposed, we should become mere helpless victims; or rather the battle would be over us between God and the Devil,—an idea almost blasphemous to a Christian mind, and which would shock us more, if we had not been long inured to it by traditionary teaching.

But, further, the thought of a creature of God, set apart for hopeless wickedness and misery, and an object worthy of hatred, is fraught with danger to the soul that entertains it. If a person, a thinking being, may be hated, why not also *men*, his agents, or who seem to be so? How is the Apostle's word to be fulfilled by us—

'Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.'

or our Lord's own command, that we should be 'perfect, even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect'—

'For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.'

And, indeed, what a large measure of the notorious curse of all times—the 'odium theologicum'—is actually due to the belief, that the justly-detested devil has inspired the 'heretic,' the man who denies or doubts what we hold to be sacred truth! Our feeling for those who are in any grievous error, or even in grievous sin, ought to be one in which pity shall overbalance indignation. Why, then, does it seem almost ludicrous to speak of the greatest of all sinners as an object of pity? Surely, because in our hearts we have most of us long ago ceased to believe in his personal existence. In the language of the Roman Catholic writer, which I quoted this morning,—though he indeed laments the fact as 'one of the greatest evils of the present time'—

In practice, at least, no one believes in the devil.

Is it not better, then, to bring our latent disbeliefs to the light and acknowledge them one to another, than to keep them mixed up with things really sacred and venerable to us?

On the other hand, to disbelieve in the existence of a Fallen Angel, hopelessly fallen, and still at war with God, still warring and often victorious, victorious in the ruin of countless multitudes of human spirits, however finally, after a long career of malice, his powers of further mischief may be terminated, and himself, with all his victims, the trophies of his victories, cast into the lake of fire,—to dis-



believe in the being of this Evil One *need* not—*must* not—be with us the same as to think lightly of evil itself, of its soul-destroying power. Should we take less precaution against the *pestilence*, because we no longer speak of it in Eastern phraseology as the Angel of the Lord, with his sword drawn in his hand, sent forth to smite the people? Are the poisonous apples of forbidden pleasure less dangerous, when they merely hang upon the trees before our reach, than when held out to us by the hand of a fiend? Is idleness, the absence of useful, healthful occupation, less pernicious to active minds and bodies, because there is no evil spirit near unseen, to find tasks of mischief for idle hands to do? As well might it be argued that men will not shrink from *death*, nor care for the conservation of health and life, because the ‘grisly terror’ is not a person, because the skeleton king, with his ghastly emblems, has no place among real beings. As well might it be supposed that we must not abhor *sin*, because we do not see that monster in visible form, described by the poet of Paradise Lost, as one that—

seemed woman to the waist, and fair,  
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,  
Voluminous and vast.

No! let us not for a moment be thought, in expressing doubts as to the personal existence of a devil, to be ready to ‘make a mock of sin,’ to trifle with that ‘abominable thing which God hates.’ It is one reason, indeed, for attacking the popular superstition about the devil, that the absurd and grotesque ideas which belong to it are too apt to be associated in the minds of the young and thoughtless, with sin, with guilt, with temptation—things which should never be spoken of lightly. Whereas, if all from their childhood were taught to understand the Scripture phrases on this subject as *figures* for what is most real and most fearful, yet not *personal*, any more than death is personal, or time, or this present evil world,—the Satan, the Tempter, the Enemy of souls of the New-Testament-teaching, would never suggest any but serious thoughts. On the other hand, how many childish terrors might have been spared, if the Prince of Darkness had not been part of the creed of our children,—if they had never been told of any spirits, of any invisible persons, except the Spirit of God, their

Father, Creator, and Sustainer, as present now upon earth,—if they had always been taught to regard the darkness of the night as the shadow of His protecting wing,—pain as His discipline, or, it may be, at times, His chastisement,—if religion, instead of giving form and substance to the natural terrors, which beset the imagination of the young and weak, had been employed to strengthen the reason against them,—as in the case of him who feared God and nought beside !

We know, however, that, though the old devil, with horns and hoofs, has long been consigned to the regions of the grotesque, and the spirits of the ‘power of the air,’ together with those of the flood and the fell, the fays, and gnomes, and goblins innumerable, are now only known to the fairy tales of childhood, there are still not a few adult Christians, and not amongst the uneducated alone, who do not really in *practice*,—as the French writer says,—but who do in *fancy*, believe in a devil, or spirit purely evil, the foe of God and Man,—who think they are compelled to do so by certain phrases in the New Testament,—who suppose even that the great problem of the existence of evil has some light thrown upon it by the hypothesis that such a being exists. Surely this last supposition is but a delusion of the imagination. For how did evil begin with Satan himself—begin in the very courts of Heaven? Were it not better to admit at once that *that* problem is beyond our powers, especially when we look at it, not in the abstract alone, but incarnated, as it were, and made visible, in all the woes and corruptions of ‘this present evil world,’—on the other hand, to hold fast the belief, that evil, as such, proceeds not from the All-Good,—that it is permitted for wise ends,—that it will be the means of greater good,—that it is the strife which is to issue in a more glorious victory?

But it were harder still to believe that a creature *purely* evil draws every instant his being, and those wondrous powers, with which the fancy of poets has endowed him, from our God and Father, the ‘Father of Lights.’ Moral disorder may be endured for a time, if it is to issue in the victory of order—chaos before creation—but not otherwise. The mind refuses to grasp it; the heart revolts from beholding it in God’s world. For consider what is

implied in the existence of such a spirit. Is not God the one Living Fountain of all Being? To assert otherwise, were to fall into the error of the Manichees. But 'to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him': and an idol or devil is 'nothing in the world.'

But is it not a proof of the Divine origin and essential truth of Christianity, that it has worked, and is still working, its way out of all the accidents of its birth,—that, however the ignorance of the age, in which it was first promulgated, may have clouded its first beginnings, and the still deeper ignorance of mediæval times may have well nigh hidden its heavenly light, yet the progress of the race in every respect only makes clearer and brighter, more acceptable to the purest hearts and highest intellects, the teaching of the Divine Word by the lips of Jesus, respecting the Father of our spirits, and His Kingdom of love, forgiveness, purity, self-sacrifice? The devil is another name for the spirit of division and hatred; and how, as our Lord says, can such a kingdom stand? But there is a Kingdom which cannot be moved, and against which 'the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.' And it ought to belong to the faith of this our 'wondrous Mother Age,' to feel the Presence of a God of Order more distinctly revealed, more near, more awful, and more adorable, in the universe as *we* know it, lighted up by Science in so many places which were dark to our fathers, than as they conceived it, a theatre for the capricious operations of an infinite number of mystic agents more or less evil.

I will quote on this subject some very impressive words, which have reached us from England by the mail just arrived, and which will show the tone of thought which is there prevailing among some of the most earnest and devout minds of the present day (*Spectator*, Dec. 31, 1865):—

That Christ used personal language of the Devil is clear. But then he called Peter himself a Satan, when he deprecated with excusable eagerness the shameful death predicted for himself by our Lord . . . That the feeling of *personal resistance* to the spirit of evil represented to our Lord the truest view of it, is clear; and we think it of infinite importance to hold by that feeling; but that would be the whole result to us of knowing, even if we could know, that the spirit of evil is a *person*, and more than a force to be resisted. That Christ himself,

in his human nature, held this view, we do not doubt ; but certainly he never revealed it as a truth to be grasped at by us, or as one of inestimable value to human nature, as he did God's Fatherhood, and his own eternal union with the Father. Indeed his own language is hesitating. Sometimes, he calls the spirit of evil the 'prince of this world': sometimes, as we have seen, he applies the title of tempter to any human agency which is made the instrument of temptation. But, after all, 'deliver us from evil,' rather than from 'the Devil,' is the language that most accurately expresses his thought *in prayer*. It is evident that Christ's language on the Devil is no more part of his *revelation* than his language concerning the causes of fevers, epilepsy, and madness, which always accepted the popular belief in the theory of possession. Unless we feel ourselves bound,—as textualists do in *word*, but not, we imagine, in *thought*,—to accept his language on the one subject as definitive, we cannot do so on the other, except so far as it shows us the true spiritual attitude of a perfect mind towards evil flashes of suggestion . . . That evil *is* personal, directly our wills yield to it, we know, and that the only refuge from it, the Divine Power which can alone deliver us, is personal, we also know. But that evil is personal before we absorb it into our own wills, we do not know ; though we know we should bear ourselves towards it *exactly as if it were* ; nor does it seem to us even desirable to plunge our plummet further than this into the metaphysics of the Devil . . . In fine, we concur heartily in renouncing the Devil, *whatever* or *whoever* he may be, and all his works ; for that is only renouncing evil, which we have to do every day of our lives. But as to *acknowledging* his personality, is not that almost too much like embodying him in our creed, which would be a mistake, even if he exists ? Intellectually to *ignore*, morally to resist *him or it*, as the case may be,—is not that the highest attainable attitude of the Christian mind towards evil ?

Let us, then, as I said this morning, divest the parable before us of the phraseology of that day, which treated of the natural history of evil spirits and of their delight in dry or barren places, and seek to read in it a lesson of value for all times.

The heart of man cannot be empty : it is meant to be the temple of the Living God. But if His worship is not carried on in it, we may expect to see some foul or vain idol there, with suitable priest and rites. Even against superstition, and even in this age of light, there is no sure defence but a firm and living faith in the God of Order, the God of Love, the Faithful Creator. Some men may—but men in general cannot—rest contented with the world of sense, however extended for them by Science, however improved by Civilization. The heart is ever craving for the Unseen, for some one to worship, for spiritual communion. 'We live by faith, and not by sight.' And even

the so-called spiritualism of the present day, with its 'rapings' and 'manifestations' of various kinds, childish as it may seem, is a symptom of this craving. Hence, as one has truly said (the Rev. F. W. Robertson) :—

Our salvation does not depend on our having *right notions about the Devil*, but *right feelings about God*. And, if you hate evil, you are on God's side, whether there be a personal evil principle, or not . . . The Bible *does* reveal God, and except with a belief in God there will and can be no goodness. But I can conceive intense hatred of wrong with great uncertainty whether there be a Devil or not. Indeed, many persons, who believe in a Devil, are worse instead of better for their belief, since they throw the responsibility of their acts off themselves on him.

But let us follow a little more closely the different parts of the description in the text, and see to what circumstances they refer in the actual spiritual life of Man. 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man.' He is not here spoken of as *cast out*, under the influence of prayer and true repentance, by the Spirit of God. But he 'goes out' of him; he leaves his victim for a while, seemingly of his own accord, at his own pleasure.

There are facts, as I said this morning, in the history of the Jewish people, which serve to illustrate and explain this occurrence. When God's afflicting hand was laid upon them, they were brought low for a time; they returned and inquired after God: 'when He slew them, they sought Him.' The evil spirit of self-will and pride and stubbornness seemed for a season to have departed from them. Nevertheless,—

' They did but flatter Him with their mouth;  
They lied unto Him with their tongues;  
For their heart was not right with Him,  
Neither were they steadfast in His Covenant.'

So it often happens with individual men. They are subdued for a while, and brought low by afflictions. Death enters their house, or some great misfortune overtakes them. They can no longer indulge their habitual vices. There is something distasteful in the very thought of them at the moment. They have no wish for them left, no power of enjoying them. So it often happens also with a man, after some great sin has been committed. There is a momentary lull of the passions, which urged him on to commit it, if not a reaction and struggle of his better na-

ture against the vice that is undoing him. The man is glutted with his own wickedness; he is sick of his own iniquities; for a season he loathes them and shuns them, and cannot take pleasure in them. At such times as these, the 'unclean spirit' seems to have gone out of him; and good thoughts, perhaps, begin to stir within him, the gracious inspirations of the Spirit of God. And then, if he would but hail these signs of life!—if he would but seek by prayer and confession of sin that help and strength from above, which will never be withheld from those who cry for it!—if he would yield up his heart to the Spirit of God, that He may come, and enter in, and take full possession, and rule, and abide in it for ever! But the man does not this. He suffers those quiet moments to pass away, neglected, unimproved. He does not seek the purifying Grace of God to make clean his inner being, to purge out all the evil that still lingers within him. He does but 'sweep and garnish the house,'—makes some faint resolutions of amendment, reforms some points, perhaps, in his daily practice.

And so the Evil will return upon him after a time. The old temptations will recover their hold; he will fall again beneath their power, and become more helplessly enslaved to their influence. Perhaps, his attempt at reformation may have included some more regular attention to the duties of religion, as in the case of the Jews of old. Or changes may have occurred in his own position and circumstances, which prevent his recurring to the gross outward sins, in which he formerly indulged. But the heart-sin is still there; and the same guilty passions are served, though it be in a different way, and under the cover of an outward show of religious profession. In the language of the text, 'the unclean spirit' has returned, and found the house 'swept and garnished,' but 'empty' still, not in possession of its rightful Lord. And he has gone and taken to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself,—

'and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.'

Such is the solemn lesson taught us in this passage by the lips of him, who spake 'as never man spake,' with a Power and Wisdom which proclaimed his intimate knowledge of the human heart and of all its doings. Let us be-

were how we leave *our own* hearts at any moment empty—without the Presence, desired and realized by us, of their only rightful Indweller, the Spirit of God. Day by day, as we awake from sleep each morning, let us invite by humble prayer this Heavenly Friend and Comforter, to take possession of us wholly, and rule us body, soul, and spirit, that we may live the day through to the Glory of God. And then, from time to time, as the hours pass on, let us remind ourselves of His august Presence, and listen to His voice, and watch that we may not grieve Him.

And, if even a man be overtaken in a fault, and overcome by some present temptation, as for want of due watchfulness and prayer he may be suffered to be, to his soul's present loss of peace, and the certain hindrance of his progress to the Kingdom of God, yet let him seize the first moment of release from the strength of the temptation, when the 'unclean spirit,' as it were, has gone out of him, and he is left 'rent and torn,' ashamed, confounded, miserable, with a wretched consciousness of guilt, and a sore sense of his fall. Let him seize that moment to return to God with sorrowful confession of his fault and humble prayer for His Chastisement and His Forgiveness. Let him take with him the words of our brother of old, and cry:—

'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God:'

'I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: O seek thy servant; for I do not utterly forget Thy Commandments.'

### III.

## THE BONDWOMAN AND THE FREE.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1866.

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GAL. IV. 31.

'SO THEN, BRETHREN, WE ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THE BONDWOMAN, BUT OF THE FREE.'

WHEN we speak of freedom, what do we mean by it? What is freedom? What is compulsion? The seeming examples of freedom, to which we sometimes point in the outer world, are only delusive. The wind, as we say, 'bloweth where it listeth,' but it follows a law as inexorable as the comet when it wheels about the sun, or the earth when it revolves upon its axis. The path of a flash of lightning—the movement of the waves of the sea—the fall of the barren leaf or of a drop of rain—takes place in obedience to the laws which the Creator has set to the Universe. The flight of the bird or the insect—the dart of the fish—is guided by blind instinct, is stimulated, directed, controlled, by the inexorable laws of its nature. Droughts or excessive floods of rain, with their attendant consequences, famine or pestilence, are not the effects of chance, or the wild work of capricious demons, whose malice is seeking to thwart the prudence and industry of man. But they result from the constant operations of God's laws, established in the natural world; and, among other wise and gracious purposes, for which they are doubtless ordained, they are meant also for our training and discipline in the temper and true spirit of God's children. To pray, therefore, that rain may be given, or a pestilence averted, when in the ordering of God's Providence a time of drought comes upon us, or a season of unhealthiness, is



not the proper part of a Christian. What we should pray for at such times is—not that the course of nature should be changed for us—but that we may be helped and strengthened from above to do our duty in the time of trial, that we may possess our souls in faith and patience, awaiting God's time—the time fixed by His laws—for the relief of our present distress, and meanwhile may have grace, each in his station, to do God's Work and abide His Will, using the powers which He has given us, wisely and diligently, for lightening the pressure of the evil on ourselves and others, for shortening its duration, and making provision against its return.

But not only these evils, as they are commonly called—but evil persons also—lawless and wicked men—are still under law to God. 'The Lord hath made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.' They, too, are not free to do what they like! they are not their own masters, as they vainly suppose. They too are subject to inexorable laws—the laws of the moral world—which connect inevitable consequences with all sin, which bind the sinner to his woe. By other laws of the moral world those consequences, it is true, may be modified: by repentance and return to God the bitter sense of guilt and separation from God may be changed into contrition and submission to chastisement. But the Law of God stands eternally sure—without which the whole universe would be shaken to its very foundations—that sin, wilful sin, shall be coupled with sorrow. If it be the sorrow of a child, grieving that it has grieved its Father, and lost for a while the joyful sense of His nearer Presence, the light of His countenance,—if it be 'godly sorrow, working repentance unto life, not to be repented of,'—in such sorrow there is life and hope; in such a case—

'The flowers may appear again on the earth,—the time of singing come,—and the voice of the turtle once more be heard in the land.'

Otherwise, as we know by sad and constant experience, one wilful sin drags on the victim to another. He may seem to be free, to act with a high hand, to 'draw sin,' as the prophet says, 'as it were with a cart-rope.' But in reality all the while he is bound by the inexorable laws of his moral being: he becomes the slave of his own appetites, is mastered more and more by his passions, is more

and more unable to resist and overcome that evil habit, lust, or tendency, which has gained the lordship over him, and is driven on, alas! how often! to destruction both of body and soul.

No! the license of the wicked is not 'freedom.' The unreasoning caprice of the vain and thoughtless is not 'freedom': it is merely a sign of their weakness, which leaves them to be the victims of each passing desire, to be blown about by every gust of inclination. If we ask, however, What is 'freedom,' the glorious birthright of a living man?—words and figures of speech must fail us, when we wish to describe that sublime gift, — which is yet not an absolute *gift*, which Omnipotence itself cannot bestow, but holds out ever before the struggling soul. Yes! God gives us eyesight, spiritual eyesight, to see the good, the right, the true,—to see them as they are, to see that they are excellent, lovely, desirable,—to see also what we shall lose by not choosing them, by rejecting the good and choosing the evil,—to see the awful gulf which will then separate us from all things bright, and pure, and blessed, from the noble and true in heart of every age, and from the Vision of God. Still it remains for us to choose:—

'See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil . . . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life.'

Absolute freedom is moral perfection: and this can be predicated only of the Eternal God. Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Goodness, we worship in Him, we find them in Him alone. *Our* freedom can only be relative, and consists in the conformity of our wills to his Will. Not to *serve* God merely, but *willingly* to serve Him, is for us perfect freedom,—not to serve God for hire, or from slavish fear of the consequences of disobedience, but to be 'partakers' in our measure 'of the Divine Nature,' to love what He loves, to hate what He hates. This freedom is the birthright of man,—our Divine heritage, in respect of which we are 'joint-heirs with Christ,'—the 'inheritance of the saints in light,'—the 'glorious liberty of the sons of God.'

How, then, shall we attain to the enjoyment of this freedom?—for our inheritance is a promised land, and our life on earth is only a pilgrimage towards it. It is a pilgrimage towards it, but one in which our Guide and Leader is

Divine. He goes before us, as (the story tells us) He went before Israel of old, in the 'pillar of cloud' and the 'pillar of fire': by night and by day He takes not away the signs of His Presence from us. This mortal life, with all its 'changes and chances,' is not interposed, by some capricious and hostile power, between our longing souls and the land of liberty and life. It is the wisely-appointed needful discipline, by which God means to bring us there. As George Herbert says:—

Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!  
 Parents first season us; then schoolmasters  
 Deliver us to laws; they send us bound  
 To rules of reason, holy messengers,  
 Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,  
 Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,  
 Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,  
 Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,  
 Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,  
 The sound of Glory ringing in our ears,—  
 Without our shame,—within our consciences,—  
 Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.

But the Apostle in the text speaks of the state of man under the law as one of bondage, and analogous to that time in the life of every one, when he is still 'under tutors and governors,' as not being yet come to years of discretion. 'The law was our schoolmaster,' he says,—or rather, our school-leader, like the servant who used to lead young children to school, for this is the Apostle's meaning,—'the Law was our guardian and keeper, to bring us to Christ.' The Law regulated chiefly the outward conduct—at least, the older portions of the Law in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; and, when it had to do with moral questions, it dealt chiefly in prohibitions, 'Thou shalt not kill,' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But even in its later utterances, and its more spiritual requirements, it was still the Law, and spoke imperiously and uncompromisingly,—

'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength:'

'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

This seems harder and more cruel than any amount of prohibitions. Who can compel themselves to love on pain of perdition? How do our hearts naturally stiffen against our 'neighbour,' when his interests come into competition

with our own ! We may strive to obey such commands as these : but it is hard to do so merely under the constraint of authority.

Under the Gospel, however, instead of a mere authoritative command, we hear an Apostle saying, ' We love Him because He first loved us.' And the Master himself lays down in this manner the law of brotherly-love :—

' If ye love me, keep my commandments ' ;—

' This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you ' ;—

' Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

The obedience of children—' sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,'—who know their Father's Mind and Will, and heartily sympathize with it,—this is that ' perfect law of liberty,' into which the Gospel of Jesus Christ initiates us. Henceforth we are to call no man master upon earth : the Truth, which he has taught us, has ' made us free,' and we are ' free indeed.' One is our Father, even God, and all we are brethren. One is our Master, even Christ, and his kingdom, as he said, is not of this world ; it is a kingdom of ' righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' set up within us. We shall now make use of the Law, of our own free will, to regulate our course by : we shall prize it as the exposition of our Father's Mind and Will, by the breathing of His Spirit on the minds of our fellow-men. We shall not, indeed, read the Bible with a blind idolatrous worship, with a slavish subjection of the mind to the mere letter of the sacred volume ; but we shall read it with intelligence, and a devout desire to drink into the spirit of it, to feed upon the Living Bread which it supplies to us. We shall treasure devoutly these records of the religious life of other ages, the life of men who thought and spoke and wrote as servants of God, and who were moved, as we are now, by the Holy Ghost. We shall say with the Psalmist—

' Lord, how love I thy Law : it is my meditation all the day. . . . How sweet are Thy words unto my taste ! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth !'

We shall not fear God, in the sense of wishing to fly from Him. But we shall fear greatly to displease and grieve our Heavenly Father,—to be separated from Him,—to lose, even for a time, the joy and comfort of His Presence,—to

have His Face hidden from us in Displeasure. We shall not dread the punishment due to our sins. We shall rather bow our heads submissively and welcome it,—that ‘loving correction, which shall make us great,’—as those who know that,—‘Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’ Our prayer will be,—‘Correct me, O Lord, with judgment, in Thy Loving-kindness,—not in Thine Anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.’

Such, then, is the freedom of living men,—the liberty which we may all enjoy as the children of God, who are under the Gospel, not under the Law,—not the ‘children of the bondwoman, but of the free.’

But St Paul was especially writing in this epistle to the Galatians about those outward observances and ceremonies of the so-called Mosaic ritual, to which some Judaizing teachers had been persuading the Galatian Christians to return, and to look on them as indispensable to their enjoying God’s favour either here or hereafter. Ye must be circumcised! Ye must do the works commanded in the Law! Ye must ‘observe days, and months, and times, and years’! Such was the teaching which, in the Churches of Galatia, had taken the place of that blessed Gospel, which Paul had preached,—

‘Ye are all the sons of God by faith:’—‘And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father:’—‘For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.’

Well might he exclaim—

‘O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the Truth?’

‘After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?’

And in the words of the text, and by his reasoning throughout the epistle, he tries to show to them and to us, if we will listen, that the yoke of Christ is not one of outward observances of any kind,—that the Christian congregation is *absolutely free* to adopt what form of worship and what form of government it shall at any time deem expedient,—only so that all things be done decently and in order, not with strife or vain-glory, but with a view to mutual edification.

‘We are the children not of the bondwoman, but of the free.’

You have heard that St Paul, in the passage of which the text is the closing sentence, and which has been read for the Epistle of to-day, applies allegorically the story of Hagar and Sarah to illustrate the state of things under the Law and under the Gospel. Of course we have here an instance of the way in which the Rabbinical spirit of those times,—in which spirit St Paul himself was nurtured,—employed the Old Testament in the religious teaching of the day. In fact, the Apostle actually refers to a legendary addition to the original account of Genesis. We read that Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar, ‘mocking,’ or rather ‘laughing.’ It is not said at whom or at what he was laughing; it is not certain that he is meant to be described as ‘mocking’ at all. But, as the matter is related as occurring on the day when Sarah’s own son Isaac was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast in consequence, and as it immediately follows,—

‘Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac’—

it was natural to suppose that Ishmael was meant to be spoken of as ridiculing Isaac; and the Rabbies went on to work out of this datum a complete story, how Isaac and Ishmael had a strife about the right of the firstborn, and how, as they were in the field together, Ishmael pursued Isaac with his arrows, &c. To this legend, most probably, St Paul refers when he says,—

‘As then he, that was born of the flesh, *persecuted* him that was born of the Spirit, even so it is now.’

This method of allegorical interpretation, which was practised extensively by the Rabbies, and of which we find so many striking instances in the works of Philo, and notably also in the canonical Epistle to the Hebrews, is no model certainly for our imitation. We, however, can derive profit from the spiritual lessons which St Paul draws for us, without accepting his method, or taking his interpretation of the ancient story as the only correct and natural one. In these days, indeed, it would be unpardonable in us to treat the Scriptures thus. The proper treatment of History, the true method of investigating the remains of former ages, is one, in fact, of the great discoveries of our day; and it is no disparagement to St Paul,

nor any derogation from his right to be heard as a preacher of righteousness, an Apostle of Christ, that he was not acquainted with it. St Paul knew well from inward experience, from the teaching of the Spirit, the nature of that Kingdom of God, which his Master had set up on earth, and for the establishment of which he had lived and died. And it signifies little by what figures of speech he may have explained his meaning to the converts of that age, provided that they were such as would be understood by *them*,—provided also that we do not now regard them as binding in the letter upon us.

St Paul, then, says that the story of Sarah and Hagar in the book of Genesis may be regarded allegorically as representing to us the 'two covenants'—

'the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar—answering to Jerusalem which now is'—

the other being that new covenant of grace, which is made known under the Gospel, which is 'Sarah,' answering to 'Mount Sion, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem'—

'For Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.'

These two covenants may be viewed as following one after another in time—either in the history of the race or in that of the individual. The Jews, during the earlier stages of their education, were kept, as the Apostle says, as 'children, in bondage under the rudiments of the world'—under a system of external worldly ordinances: but, 'when the fulness of the time was come,' Christ came with the message of life and love in the Gospel,—

'to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

So, too, in the life of the individual, — perhaps, often through the faults of early training, and as the result of traditional teaching,—the restraints of religion are felt at first as irksome; obedience is rendered under the compulsion of a law, not with the intelligent spirit of a child. Yet, as the man grows in years, he comes more clearly to see that religion is but the law of his moral being,—that to be religious is to conform to that very nature which God has given him,—that to 'fear God and keep His Commandments' is not only 'the whole *duty*,' as our Bible states it, but as the Hebrew writer really has said, (for the

word 'duty' is printed in italics, as not being in the original,) is '*the whole of man*,'—is the sum and substance of his life, health, and happiness, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual. For the true fear of God—the true love of God—the fear and love of children towards a Father—cannot be separated from the keeping of His Commandments—from the observance of those laws which are revealed to our minds and consciences in any way as laws of our being.

'This is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments; and His Commandments are not grievous.'

Religion and Morality are not, as some seem to think, two distinct things, but the same thing under different aspects: the first is the root,—the second, the stem and the branches. To know God truly, as our Father and Friend, as Christ has revealed Him to us, must beget in us the desire to be conformed unto His Will—to 'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,' the 'rational service' of intelligent beings—to be 'transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove' more perfectly, day by day, 'what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God.' This is the true essential sacrifice and service of Christ's religion. This is the 'pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father,' which Christ has taught us, with which whosoever 'serveth Christ' is 'acceptable to God and approved of men.' Our hope for eternity cannot depend upon our believing implicitly in the absolute infallible truth of each word of the Bible,—much less, of each statement of the Athanasian and other Creeds, which fallible men have derived from the Bible,—but upon our living as 'new creatures' in the light of God's Love,—upon our being 'led by the Spirit,' and bringing forth daily the fruits of the Spirit—

'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.'

In fact, we hear nothing from the lips of Jesus about creeds and articles, as necessary to salvation,—nothing about forms of worship, rites and ceremonies, as binding on his followers, without which they cannot hope to share the blessed hope of God's children;—though he taught them to pray, he bade them baptize disciples in his name,



he said to them at the Last Supper, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' and he all along set them the example of frequenting the House of God and joining in common worship, of praying and giving thanks, both privately and publicly, to Him who is the God and Father of all. He tells us nothing about systems of Church-Government,—about Priests and Deacons, Bishops and Metropolitans, Synods and Councils—but says only—

'Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Does it follow that articles of faith, forms of worship, systems of Church Government, are of no value at all—are useless or unimportant! Surely not. But it does also surely follow that they are not *essentials* in the religion of Jesus,—that they ought not to separate those who are true Christians in heart and life from one another,—those who are 'meek' and 'merciful,' 'pure in heart,' 'peacemakers,' those who 'are hungering and thirsting after righteousness,' and whom Christ himself calls 'blessed.' It does follow that differences of opinion about doctrinal matters, or about questions of Church Government, ought not to be an excuse for the breach of that last emphatic command of him whom we profess to honour—

'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

God is infinitely more glorified by justice and mercy and charity towards others, by the love of truth and purity of heart in ourselves, than by all the gorgeous worship, the multiplied prayers and praises, the temples and offerings, which the wealth of kings and princes could bestow, or their power and example encourage or enforce, or by all the rites and ceremonies, the vestments and decorations, which are thought of so much consequence by many in the present day. When the King of Moab asked of old—

'Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah,  
And bow myself before the Most High God?  
Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,  
With calves of a year old?

Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,  
Or with ten-thousands of rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,  
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?'

we know that the prophet is described as answering—

'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good :  
And what doth Jehovah require of thee,  
But to do justly, and to love mercy,  
And to walk humbly with thy God ?'

And St Paul saw clearly the essence of true Christianity, when he wrote to these Galatians, who wanted to put themselves again under the Law—

'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage :'

'For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another :'

'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil *the law of Christ*.'

## IV.

### THE BONDWOMAN AND THE FREE—(*continued*).

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 11, 1866.

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GAL. IV. 31.

'SO THEN, BRETHREN, WE ARE NOT CHILDREN OF THE BONDWOMAN,  
BUT OF THE FREE.'

I EXPLAINED this morning that St Paul is here writing to the Galatian Christians, whom he himself had been the first to instruct in the faith, and to bring to the knowledge of the one only true and living God,—but who had now been persuaded by Judaizing teachers to fall back from the liberty, wherewith Christ's Gospel, as ministered to them by the Apostle himself, had set them free, into the servitude of Jewish ritualism,—blending with it, indeed, a profession of faith in Christ, but corrupting the simple word of truth, which he had preached to them, with a mixture of superstitious and ceremonial observances—

'turning again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desired to be in bondage'—'observing days and months and times and years.'

Let us observe carefully the very strong language which St Paul uses to the Galatians, in speaking of this change which had passed upon them. He says—

'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto *another Gospel*, which is not another, but there be some that trouble you,—[or, 'which is only because there be some that trouble you']—and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'

You may have heard these expressions quoted—as I have

heard them quoted frequently—against those who are endeavouring to reconcile the religious teaching of the day with the results of Modern Science,—in other words, to bring forth into the light the pure Gospel, which Christ himself taught when on earth, from the obscurity in which it has so long been hidden, by the mass of traditionary matter which in a later age has been heaped upon it. But this is only to make a gross misapplication of the Apostle's language; it is to use it just for the very opposite purpose to that for which it was originally written. For those who, in St Paul's view, were 'removing' his converts 'from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel,'—those who were 'perverting the Gospel of Christ,'—those who were 'preaching another Gospel than that which he had preached to them, and which they had received,'—on whom the Apostle, with a severity quite unusual with him, pronounces twice a hearty anathema,—were the *ritualists* of that day, the old traditionary teachers, who made much of circumcision, who made their boast in the Law, who would not hear of the grace of God being given to all who 'through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by *faith*,' but insisted upon it that a man was justified, not by God's Goodness, flowing freely from the fountains of His Love, but by a careful observance of the works of the Law, by the practice of circumcision, by the strict keeping of rites and ceremonies, by the observance of 'days and months and times and years.'

It is well worth our while—more especially with reference to the discussions of the present day—to spend a few moments in tracing the course of argument, pursued by the great Apostle in this letter to the Galatians. He begins with a salutation, very different in tone from those which we find in his epistles to other Churches. There are no warm words of affection poured out upon his beloved disciples: there is no commendation of their growth in Divine things: no mention of them as 'sanctified in Christ Jesus,' 'beloved of God,' 'called to be saints.' There is an obvious coldness and reserve in his manner of addressing them—perhaps unintentional on his part—which marks, however, the Apostle's consciousness that indeed they were very far 'removed,' not only from the grace of Christ—but 'from him who had called them' into it—

‘unto another Gospel,’—whether he means by this that they were removed from God Himself, who had been pleased to call them, or, as I rather think, that they were rent asunder from the Apostle himself, that the bond was broken, which had bound his heart and theirs together in former days, when, as he tells them,—

‘I bear you record that, if possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.’

However, it is his duty to do what he can to save them from this dangerous system, which was getting the mastery over them—to ‘travail in birth again with them, until,’ if it might be, ‘Christ should be formed in them’ once more. He reminds them first how he himself had been at one time a ritualist, among the most extreme High-Churchmen of the Jewish Church,—how he had—

‘profited in the Jews’ religion above many his equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers.’

But when it had ‘pleased God to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen,’—when the truth of Christ’s blessed Gospel flashed upon his mind, and he saw that it was a message of love to all mankind, a message of love from the Father of Spirits, to tell us, one and all, Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female, that we are ‘all the children of God by faith’—‘no more servants, but sons, and, if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ’—he cared not for man’s approval or disapproval,—he ‘conferred not with flesh and blood,’—but in God’s strength he went forth to ‘preach the faith which once he destroyed.’

And so he did preach it, publishing to all the glad tidings of great joy—till, when fourteen years had past, he went up to Jerusalem, and told the chief men of the Church the nature of that Gospel, which he had proclaimed among the heathen,—not, however, that he looked to be corrected and instructed by them,—not that they helped him at all, or even favoured his liberal views,—

‘whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me,—God accepteth no man’s person,—for they who seemed to be somewhat—[that is, they who seemed to be the chief authorities]—in conference added nothing to me’—

but simply that he might not leave them in the dark as to his doings. He would not even have his companion,

Titus, circumcised,—he was resolved that he should not be circumcised,—

‘and that, because of false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily, to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.’

Nay, afterwards, ‘when Peter was come to Antioch,’ and there, notwithstanding all his previous convictions,—notwithstanding that he had said years before—

‘God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean’—

shrunk timidly from confessing openly in act what he acknowledged in his heart, ‘withdrew and separated himself’ from the Gentile converts, and, for fear of the Jewish brethren, ‘dissembled,’ and ‘others with him,’ inso-much that Paul’s own fellow-traveller Barnabas also was ‘carried away by their dissimulation,’—St Paul ‘withstood’ St Peter ‘to his face, because he was to be blamed,’—the Apostle of the Gentiles, the *last* and, as he says himself, the *least* of the apostles, openly ‘before them all’ rebuked sharply the *chief* of the apostles, and perhaps the *oldest*, one who had been in Christ many years before himself, who had walked with Christ on earth, who had heard his teaching, who was one of his Master’s three most favoured followers, and had received from his lips that memorable declaration,—

‘Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’

And why was it that St Paul rebuked St Peter? For the same reason for which he now rebukes the teachers who had corrupted the Galatians—because, by his example, at all events, he and Barnabas and others were doing their part towards binding again upon the necks of these converts those ordinances of the Jewish Law, those ceremonial observances, which were utterly abrogated, and in this way were frustrating the grace of God.

Then he exclaims—

‘O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the Truth? . . . This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?’

He tells them how Abraham was justified by *faith*—by simply trusting in the Living God—before any Law was published,—how the Gospel was preached before-hand to him—the promise of God's favour was freely given to him—the knowledge of God's Fatherly Love was revealed to him,—that he might be an example to us,—that we too 'might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' He tells them that 'the Scripture has concluded all under sin,'—has declared us all to be sinners,—not for the purpose of condemning us, as miserable outcasts from God's Favour and Love,—but in order 'that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to all that believe.' He tells them that they 'have all received the adoption of sons,' and—

'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.'

He warns them that, if they will be entangled again under the yoke of bondage, they will lose all the joy of the Gospel, all the glorious liberty of the children of God, where-with the word of Christ had made them free :—

'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing . . . Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law : ye are fallen from grace ;'—they would live henceforth under a system of constraint, not as children, in the enjoyment of their Father's Love. 'Stand fast, therefore,' he says, in the glorious liberty into which ye are called : only remember always your high calling, and live as becomes the children of God :—

'This I say, Walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.'

Your 'freedom' will be worth no more than the slavish religion of others,—it will be your ruin,—if you presume upon the grace of God, and 'use it for an occasion to the flesh,' sinning the more, that grace may the more abound.

He says—

'Be not deceived : God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

And then once more he turns to them, as if in their hearts he might still find lingering a spark of their old affection :—

'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.'

Again he warns them against their Judaizing teachers: he tells them that—

‘In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,’—

or rather a new creation, a new life, the life of those that walk with God, and seek to conform their whole being to His Will:—and he ends with words, in which (as one has said, Prof. Jowett, on *Gal.vi.17*)—

the feeling is anger passing into sorrow,—the Apostle rightly thinking that the sufferings, which he had endured, should give him a kind of sacredness in their eyes—

‘From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit. Amen.’

I repeat, my brethren, St. Paul was the *liberal*—the *rationalist*—of those days, so far as his eyes were opened, so far as it had pleased God to reveal the Truth to him. He would not, we see, be bound by the opinions of those who were in Christ long before himself: he opposed himself vigorously to his dear friend Barnabas, and even to Peter, the chief of the apostles, when he said that ‘they were not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel.’ And both in this epistle, and in all his writings, and in all his labours, from the time of his conversion to the end of his career, he was ever the determined adversary of the old traditionary system, whenever it was attempted to fasten it, as a yoke, upon the necks of his disciples. For those also who had been trained up in the Jewish religion, he was considerate and forbearing; he could even share their feelings, if necessary, having been himself—

‘brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of their fathers;’—

he could sympathize sincerely with his brethren, and become, if need be, ‘a Jew to the Jews, that he might win the Jews’; he could join in their worship, and adopt their practices,—could himself take upon him Jewish vows, Acts xxi.23-26, and have Timothy, as the son of a Jewish mother, ‘circumcised because of the Jews.’ But Titus, we have seen, a pure Greek, he would not allow to be circumcised, expressly refusing to sacrifice the truth of the Gospel—to ‘give place by subjection’ to the ritualistic party,—‘no, not for an hour.’ The light of Modern Science



was not vouchsafed to St Paul. In many things, therefore, he saw things darkly, which we see plainly in these our days; in many things he was, no doubt, mistaken. But, so far as he did see clearly, he was, I say again, the *liberal* religious teacher of that day: and the complaint was continually made against him that he had been—

‘teaching all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.’

And the fiercest adversaries that he met with were his own countrymen, the chief priests and scribes, the strenuous maintainers of traditionary views and ceremonial observances, to whose persecutions he refers when he says—

‘*Of the Jews* five times received I forty stripes save one: once was I stoned.’

I need hardly tell you that something analogous to that, which St Paul lamented in the Galatian Churches, is taking place in our own days within the bounds of our National Church. Thank God! the infection is not by any means as yet generally—much less universally—prevalent throughout the churches of our mother-land. But yet it prevails to a very great extent, and far beyond what would even have been thought credible or possible a few years ago. In the times before the Reformation, the corrupted Church had made the ‘sacrifice and service’ of Christianity to consist, not in the offering of a free heart and pure life, but in a mass of rites and ceremonies, as heavy as the ceremonial yoke which pressed upon the Jews of old. Our ancestors were indeed ‘entangled again with a yoke of bondage.’ Prayer, from a high spiritual privilege, became a performance, a meritorious act: the ‘communion,’ in which as Dr Arnold says, (*The Church*, p.21)—

the common faith and love of those communicating constitute the real consecration of the bread and wine,—

became the ‘mass,’ with all its superstitions and idolatries,—the mass, wherein, in the words of the same great writer, what would otherwise be common food—

because the priest has pronounced certain words over it, has acquired a divine virtue—a miraculous power,—and unless you are partakers of this you cannot be saved, p.22.

The consciences and minds of Christian people were trampled, in fact, under the feet of the priesthood, who, like the Scribes in our Lord’s days, had taken away the key of

knowledge, neither entering in themselves, nor suffering others to enter in. From this state we were delivered by heroic men, who were persecuted by priests of those days, just as St Paul was before them, because that, 'after the way which they called heresy, so worshipped they the God of their fathers,'—were persecuted even unto death.

And now, in our own time, again, those words have a special meaning for us—

'Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.'

For it seems almost as if all the corruptions of Romanism were coming back upon us again in a flood,—the sacrificing priesthood,—the confessional,—the draperies and gorgeous vestments, the attitudes and various ceremonies, which go to swell the grandeur of the Altar Services, and convert them from simple acts, which we do 'in remembrance' of Christ, into a splendid spectacle, a tremendous sacrifice, which even they who do not desire to communicate may be invited to witness, and so may perhaps be brought at last to 'submit their reason to the wondrous mystery,' and—

'have kindled within them a more perfect devotion to Jesus, veiled in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar!'

There are those here present, I doubt not, who are well aware that this is no fanciful statement,—no exaggerated view of what is actually going on at this very time in some parts of the Church of England. But, indeed, unless you have some acquaintance with the journals, which represent the principles of this party and record their doings, you will have very little conception of the extent to which the ritualistic spirit has invaded the Church of England, and the length to which it is already carried. Let me quote a few passages from a journal of this kind, which is said to be circulated weekly by thousands, and copies of which, as I am told, are to be found strewing the table of the reading-room in one of our colonial villages:—

'The English Churchman, who chooses to go to confession once a week, is every bit as loyal to his Church as another, who chooses to go only once a year, and probably a great deal more loyal than the man who chooses never to go at all. . . . But it may be said that they do receive Absolution in the Daily Public Offices of the Church. If people choose to believe this, they can do so, of course. They ought, however, to know that the theory that a general public absolution, after a

general public confession, avails for the forgiveness of grievous sin, is one altogether unknown in the Church.—*Church Times*, Sept. 23, 1865, p.298.

Again, in the Communion Service, when we have all partaken of the bread and wine, and offer the prayer of thanksgiving—

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, we Thy humble servants entirely desire Thy Fatherly Goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. . . . And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee. . . . And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service—

we have been taught to believe that the ‘sacrifice,’ which we thus offer, is that of ourselves, our ‘praise and thanksgiving,’ our ‘souls and bodies,’ our ‘bounden duty and service.’ But not so this organ of the Ritualists, *Do.p.* 300 :—

When the priest uses these words, the Sacrament still lies before him—at least, in one form, for, [even if no bread should be left,] the *Chalice* cannot of course be completely emptied *without the use of ablutions*. But, even if It (!) did not, It would not be annihilated by being received: and the words are just as applicable to It now, as they were when they were said before the Communion.

From another number of the same Journal I take the following account of the ‘Ecclesiastical Art Exhibition,’ which, it is said, ‘proved one of the chief features’ of the Church Congress at Norwich in the year just ended.

A double row of tables . . . were thickly covered with Church furniture. Chalice-vails, birettas, censers, and incense-boats, altar-vases, stoles of various hues, and such like, found a resting-place here. . . . Above these tables, on a frame-work, hung scores of copes, chasubles, dalmatics, and tunicles, of every conceivable colour and material. . . . On the uprights, supporting the frame-work aforesaid, were ranged banners of every size and hue; while, here and there, a scarlet cassock of the acolyth added brightness to what in all conscience was bright before. . . . At the back and on either side of the altar hung the banners . . . used in the festival processions at St Mary Magdalen’s, Munster Square; while hard by were displayed the festal and the Lenten chasubles from the same Church, together with stoles to match. Of the chasubles embroidered in colours, I should decidedly give the first place to one from St Mary’s, Soho. It is of white silk, with orphreys of delicately-wrought needlework, and representing passion-flowers. In the centre of the back, the crucifixion is embroidered. . . . The set of red vestments from St Matthias, Stoke Newington, comprising chasuble, dalmatic, and tunicle, though unquestionably very handsome, are somewhat heavy in appearance. The violet chasuble from the same church is open to the same criticism.

As effective a set as any was supplied from Christ Church, Clapham, chasuble, dalmatic, and tunicle of white silk, with crimson and green lace orphreys. I had an opportunity of judging how these looked when in use, for they were worn on the Thursday morning at St Laurence's. . . . . Scarlet cassocks for lay-assistants at the altar are evidently becoming popular; and the thuribles [censers], which stood about the room, here and there, showed that the beautiful and scriptural practice of burning incense during Divine Service—[imagine St Paul burning incense!]  
—is fairly coming into use among us. In a conspicuous place in the room, where everybody must have seen it, was a large printed placard, containing the rubric at the beginning of the Prayer-Book:—'Chancels shall remain as they have done in times past,' and the one which follows:—

'And here it is to be noted, that such ornaments of the Church and of the Ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained and be in use, as were in the Church of England, by the authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the VI.'

This was an excellent thought; so was that which dictated the smaller bills, which lay about the room, and informed visitors, that all the vestments which they saw around them were *in actual use in the Church of England at the present day!*

You now understand what the Bishop of London means by the purpose which he has announced of bringing in a Bill in Parliament to amend or to abolish the above Rubric. It was a Rubric well-adapted to the times when it was composed, three centuries ago, when the nation had just emerged out of Popery, and the people were still accustomed to such dresses, as part of the ceremonial of the Roman Church. But that men, in our age, should bring back those practices,—and, instead of trying to reconcile the religious teaching of the day with the facts of Science, should seek to dazzle and stupefy the minds of the impressionable and ignorant with these appeals to the outward senses,—is truly an astonishing phenomenon. To place the choicest flowers—the gifts of God's Love—the pledges of His Favour—upon the Sacred Table, is an innocent and natural act, which few would condemn,—which most would consider as helping to express the cheerful joy and gladness of Christian Worship. To consecrate the powers of music, with which God has blessed us, as a means of fixing the thoughts and raising or deepening the devotions of the people, is also very natural and praiseworthy. To build the high-arched Cathedral, and expend upon its decoration the most consummate skill in architecture, is also

a worthy occupation for a wealthy and civilized age,—provided only that we remember that God dwells not in temples made with hands, but in the lowly and pure heart,—that—

‘God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.’

But to be decorating the person of the Priest with all kinds of ornaments,—with crosses and passion-flowers,—with the crucifixion embroidered on his back, that he may turn it to the people, when he stands with his back to them, lifting up the elements that they may see the ‘tremendous sacrifice,’ the offering up of the ‘Divine Oblation,’—to cover *them* with coloured vestments, ‘chasubles,’ ‘dalmatics,’ ‘copes,’ and ‘tunics,’ with ‘scarlet cassocks for the lay-assistants,’ who are to swing the ‘thuribles,’—I need hardly say that this is something very unlike the system of our Protestant Church, and very closely resembling that of the Church of Rome.

And yet more so, you will think, when you hear one or two more passages, from the ‘Union Review Almanack,’ for 1865, another organ of this party in the Church of England.

In our interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer, its rules, its rubrics, and its offices, the following cardinal maxim should never be lost sight of, viz., that what was not legally and formally abandoned at the ‘Reformation’ by express law, is now in full force, and should be carefully, judiciously, and firmly restored.

At the Offering of the Bread, the Priest should use privately the following prayer from the Salisbury Missal—[the prayer is given in Latin, which I translate]:—

‘Receive, O Holy Trinity, this oblation, which I unworthily offer in honour of Thee and of the Blessed Mary and of all Thy Saints, for my sins and offences, for the salvation of the living and the repose of all the faithful dead. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’

The preparation of persons to receive the seven-fold gifts of Confirmation by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop consists in these two points, viz., (i) instruction in the Church Catechism, and (ii) examination of conscience according to the promises made at Baptism. In the latter the Parish Priest should do all he can to assist the candidates individually. If Confession is used, the following is the accustomed form for making it (to be said kneeling):—

‘In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I confess to God the Father Almighty, to His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to God the Holy Ghost, and to you, *father*, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. [*Here*

*comes in the Confession.*] For these and all my other sins, which I cannot now remember, I humbly beg pardon of Almighty God and grace to amend, and of you, my father, I ask penance, counsel, and absolution.'

I have said enough to show you now the nature of that movement for the revival of Ritualism, which is going on in England and elsewhere, and to indicate the great strife, in which we shall be involved ere long more deeply even than now. That movement is based upon the Sacramental System; but the Sacramental System itself is based upon the Priestly System. While there was no *priest* in the Christian Church,—while the clergy, even the Apostles, were only the *presbyters*, or elders, of the congregation, men chosen for age or character to superintend each community and represent the rest,—there was no 'Sacramental System.' Baptism was performed, as an act of admission into the Church, as a sign of discipleship; the cup was blessed, the bread was broken, not by the officiating minister alone, but by the whole body of believers,—as St Paul says, 'the cup of blessing which *we* bless'—'*we* being many'—'the bread which *we* break.' But there is no trace in St Paul's epistles of any such stress being laid upon the Sacraments as by many is now laid upon them. As an able living writer has said, himself a high advocate for Church authority, from whom I have quoted on a former occasion, (the Rev. Prebendary Irons, *The Bible and its Interpreters*, p.91)—

The number, name, and effects of these Sacred Rites, or the idea of Sacramental Influence, can with no certainty be obtained from Scripture only.

The truth is, that this 'idea of Sacramental Influence' is the offspring of a later age than that of the Apostles; and was built up, out of the simple rites as they were first practised, in order to glorify the priesthood, to justify their pretensions, to increase their power. When the presbyter was changed in the ancient Church into the priest,—a name which is never once applied to ministers of Christ in the New Testament,—then came the unapproachable altar and the horrific Sacrifice—the gorgeous vestments—the imposing ceremonial—the absolute necessity of baptism—the superstition of 'the Blessed Viaticum'—the authority of the Priest, without whom one Sacrament at least could not be administered,—and then the crowning point of all, the

dire Confessional, to which not only those are invited to come, whose consciences are burdened and oppressed, but all Church people are taught to come—husbands and *wives*, young men and *young women*, and even children, boys and girls—‘as a matter of course’ :—

They go to Confession, as a matter of course ; and they look forward to be confirmed as early as possible in order that they may become communicants. One London Church we know of, which fills our heart with delight, from the number of boy and girl communicants, some of them very small indeed.—*Church Times*.

Such is the system which is certainly progressing in England, and in the colonies. And the advocates of this system declare that they are justified in all their proceedings by the language of our rubrics and formularies, and profess to ‘maintain unimpaired the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England.’ I do not undertake to judge them in this respect : nor am I one of those who desire that their liberty should be abridged. I doubt very much if the Bishop of London will succeed in his attempt to check by legal enactments the progress of ritualism. If the ritualists can legally maintain their system, within the bounds of our National Church, as at present by Law Established, and if they can conscientiously do so, I would not myself deny them that freedom which they desire, to subject themselves, if they like, to this ‘yoke of bondage.’

But then, on our side, we—the liberal clergy of the Church of England—claim the same. ‘We are not the sons of the bondwoman, but of the free.’ We belong to the Church of England, a Protestant Church, whose fundamental principle, as we believe, is this, that the *people*, not the *priest*,—the State, represented by the Sovereign, and not the clergy,—shall make its laws, and regulate all its arrangements. This was the apostolic principle of old, when Barsabas and Matthias were first chosen in the place of Judas by the whole Church—the 120 disciples—not the apostles only,—and then ‘they prayed’ and ‘gave forth their lots ; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.’ This was the principle upon which the decision of the First Great Council at Jerusalem was given, when ‘it pleased the apostles and elders, with the *whole Church*,’ to send a letter in the name of ‘the apostles and elders and *brethren*,’ to the Churches of Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, in which letter they

said 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us'—not to us, the clergy only, but to us, the whole body of believing people.

We do not wish, then, to drive out of the Church of England the Sacramentarian Party. If they can both legally and conscientiously remain in it, we would have them remain. We would give them free license, within the bounds of the law, to inculcate their doctrines, however erroneous we may deem them, however opposed to the whole spirit of our Protestant Church. But then we claim the same liberty for ourselves. We know that the errors of Romanists and Romanizers can only be combated by setting forth the *Truth*. And, so long as we can legally and conscientiously remain within the pale of the Church of England, we insist upon our right and duty to do so. And least of all can it be tolerated that men, who hold such views as these, shall assume to themselves the power to exclude us from our common heritage as English Churchmen. We know that the conflict will be internecine again as it was in the days of old—between the authority of tradition and the claims of enlightened reason. And, as the time advances, we shall all have to take part in it—not the clergy only, but the laity also,—those among you, at least, who value, for yourselves and for your children, the liberties, as well as the laws, which our fathers have handed down to us. We know that, without *Light*, there can be no *Life*. In this our age God has given us *Light*, and we thankfully embrace it, and in that *Light*, as we trust, we shall see to do our part in the battle. Only, brethren, let us remember that the true sign of *Life* is *Love*—Love to God, and Love towards man,—an earnest desire to do the Will of God in all things, to be pure in heart and life, as the children of God,—a steadfast endeavour to be patient and charitable towards those who differ from us, while firmly pursuing our own path of duty,—well knowing that, before the Great Judge, we shall 'every man bear his own burden' for the good or for the evil he has done, and knowing also that 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'



## V.

### ‘JEHOVAH, THE LIVING GOD.’

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER’S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1866.

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#### EXODUS III. 15.

‘AND GOD SAID MOREOVER UNTO MOSES, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB, HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU: THIS IS MY NAME FOR EVER, AND THIS IS MY MEMORIAL UNTO ALL GENERATIONS.’

If you referred to your English Bibles you would find that the text, as I have now quoted it, differs in one respect from the words which you will find there printed. The difference may at first sight seem slight and of no great importance: but in reality is one of much significance. In the English Version it stands, ‘The LORD God of your fathers hath sent me unto you:’ but the Hebrew writer says, ‘JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers, hath sent me unto you.’

We have here the Name, which in a later age the superstitious fancy of the Jews declared to be unpronounceable; and to this day they never express it, when reading the Hebrew Bible, but substitute always another name for it. It would seem that at the time when the Greek translation, which we call the Septuagint, was made, two or three centuries before the birth of Christ, some feelings of this kind must have already prevailed; since they always represent the Name by a Greek word, meaning Lord, and answering to the Hebrew ‘Adonai,’ which was then probably, as it is now, substituted usually for JEHOVAH, in reading the Hebrew Bible. And the fact is, that, though we pronounce the name as JEHOVAH in English, no one knows certainly now in what manner it was originally pronounced. The

Hebrews, as most of you will know, never wrote the vowel-sounds of their words, but only the consonants. We know, therefore, what the four consonants were, which formed the Sacred Name; but from the lapse of time, since the Jews first ceased to pronounce it, we have lost all certain knowledge of the vowels with which they should be uttered. Most modern critics, however, believe that the word should be properly read—not JEHOVAH, but JAHVEH, or rather YAHVEH—meaning HE IS, and denoting thus the Eternal, the Living God, the Self-Existent Being, ‘Who is, and was, and is to be.’ And this, it should be remembered, is most probably the true interpretation of the Name, though we may still pronounce it, as it stands in our English Bibles, JEHOVAH. In point of fact, you will find JEHOVAH only in *four* places of the English Version, E.vi.3, Ps.lxxxiii.18, Is.xii.2,xxvi.4, and in *four* compound names of places, G.xxii.14, E.xvii.15, Ju.vi.24, Ez.xlviii.35 (*marg.*); whereas it really occurs in hundreds of places in the original Hebrew, but is everywhere else expressed in English, as I have mentioned, by the word LORD, in capital letters. Every attentive reader of the Bible should carefully notice this, that, wherever ‘Lord’ is printed in ordinary type, it stands simply for Adonai, ‘Master’; but wherever it is printed in capitals, it stands for the sacred Name ‘JEHOVAH.’

You will now see, however, that the words of the text acquire at once a very expressive meaning,—and one which is entirely smothered up and lost sight of in our printed translation,—when we read, as I have quoted them,—

‘Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, “JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you”’

instead of merely ‘the LORD God of your fathers hath sent me unto you.’ We see now what is meant by the closing words of the verse—

‘This is My Name for ever, and this is My Memorial unto all generations.’

This name, JEHOVAH, the Living God, ‘HE IS,’—corresponding to the declaration in the previous verse, where God Himself is introduced as speaking in the *first* person, ‘I AM hath sent me unto you,’—this is to be the Name, by which the God of Israel will be distinguished from all

other gods—from the gods of the nations round about—  
'for all generations.'

But the correct translation of this verse draws our attention also to another fact, which is lost sight of, or rather is obscured altogether, in the English Version. This word 'JEHOVAH' is described in the sixth chapter of Exodus as having been then first communicated to Moses by a direct revelation from God, as the Name by which he would henceforth be known in Israel, though a Name by which He was not known to their fathers:—

'And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am JEHOVAH. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.'

Here, then, it is distinctly stated that God was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name 'JEHOVAH,'—in other words, that JEHOVAH was now first revealed to Moses, as the Name of the God of Israel. Yet, on turning to the book of Genesis, we shall find that the name JEHOVAH is frequently put into the mouth of each of the three patriarchs. Thus—

'Abram said to the King of Sodom, "I have lift up mine hand unto JEHOVAH, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth,"' G.xiv.22,—

'Isaac said, "See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which JEHOVAH hath blessed,"' G.xxvii.27,—

'Jacob awaked out of his sleep and said, "Surely JEHOVAH is in this place, and I knew it not,"' G.xxviii.16.

In each of these instances, of course, in the English version you will find 'the LORD' instead of 'JEHOVAH;' and thus the real fact is entirely hidden up from the eye of the ordinary English reader of the Bible, that here in Genesis we have Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—all three of them—familiarily using this Divine Name, though in Exodus it is said that God appeared unto them as El Shaddai, 'God Almighty,' but was not known to them by His Name JEHOVAH. Nay, according to the story, this name was not only known to *these*, but to a multitude of others,—to Eve and Lamech before the Flood, and to Noah after it, iv.1, v.29, ix.26,—to Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, xvi.2, xxvii.7, xxix.35, xxx.24,—to Abraham's servant, Laban, and Bethuel, xxiv.27,31,50,—even to heathens, as Abimelech, the Philistine king of Gerar, his friend, and his chief captain. In various passages it is put into the mouth of

all these. In one word, it is represented as universally and familiarly known to persons of all classes *before* the time of Moses. We are even told that, shortly after the Creation, as early as the days of Seth the son, or of Enos the grandson, of Adam,—

‘Then began men to call upon the name of JEHOVAH.’

There are some who endeavour to explain away this difficulty by saying that the Name indeed was ‘known’ before the time of Moses, but was not known *thoroughly*,—was not known in all its depth and fulness of meaning. Yet the words in Exodus say plainly, ‘By my Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them’: and it can hardly be thought that this is the true explanation of the apparent discrepancy, when we are told that Abraham—

‘believed in JEHOVAH and He counted it to him for righteousness,’—and that JEHOVAH said unto Abraham,—

‘I am JEHOVAH, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.’ G.xv.6,7.

The fact is, as probably most of you are by this time aware, that these phenomena are distinctly pointing to *different writers*, belonging to different ages, who have been concerned in writing the first five books of the Bible, which we call the Pentateuch, and the book of Joshua, which is properly a part of the same work. This is not the proper time or place for going minutely into these questions of Modern Criticism. Yet every reader of the Bible should in these days know something about them, so as to be able to study the sacred volume with an intelligent appreciation of its contents.

In a few words, therefore, I will set before you the general nature of the results of these enquiries. It appears that the oldest writer in the Pentateuch—he who laid, as it were, the foundation of the whole story,—made no use of the name JEHOVAH at all, till he had written the account of its revelation to Moses in the sixth chapter of Exodus, which I have just been quoting. He uses everywhere the word ‘God’—or rather he uses the Hebrew name ‘EL’ or ‘ELOHIM,’ meaning probably ‘the Mighty One,’ or, as some think, ‘the Awful One,’ or sometimes ‘EL-SHADDAI,’ God Almighty; and hence we find him writing, as part of the address of the Divine Being to Moses,—

'I appeared unto them, as EL-SHADDAI; but by my Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.'

It is quite possible to extract from the book of Genesis and the first chapters of Exodus the parts due to this old writer,—the *Elohist* or Elohistic writer, as he is usually called, from his using the name 'ELOHIM' for God,—and to present them almost in their original form. And this has, in fact, been done; and the Elohistic narrative, as it is found imbedded in the Book of Genesis, has now been printed separately, so that any one can read it, and satisfy himself as to its being a complete, connected story—one of the most ancient histories in the world—perhaps *the* most ancient which exists in the form of a written document.

This Elohistic narrative—the foundation of the whole Pentateuch—contains the *first* account of the Creation, (that which we find in the first chapter of Genesis, and the first three verses of the second,) and the *original* account of the Deluge, which is interrupted, however, as it now stands in the Bible, by later insertions, the work of another writer. It contains also the oldest portions of the history of the Patriarchs, all told in a simple primitive style, very different from the more polished and artistic passages, which belong to a later age. For the *second* account of the Creation, in the latter part of the second and third chapters of Genesis, is written by a totally different hand; as appears not only from its employing throughout the name of 'JEHOVAH,' whereas the first chapter uses only 'ELOHIM,' but from a great number of peculiarities of style which distinguish the work of this second writer, as there are also other equally characteristic expressions, which distinguish the style of the first. Besides which, the whole account of the Creation in the second chapter is manifestly different altogether from that in the first. I will mention two points only, though an attentive perusal will detect many other variations. In the first account, you will find that man is created *last* of all living creatures, *after* the birds and beasts, i.21,25; whereas in the second, he is created *first* of all, *before* the birds and beasts, ii.19. Again, in the first account, the man and woman are created *together* on the sixth day, last of all created things, i.27; whereas in the second, the man is made *by himself*

first of all living things, without the woman, and is placed alone in the garden 'to till it and to keep it'; then the beasts and birds are created, and brought to him that he may name them; and the woman is created last of all, as by a kind of after-thought. There are like differences also between the original account of the Deluge, and the parts which betray the style of the later writer; as, for instance, where the Elohist says,—

'Of every living thing of all flesh, *two* of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee, they shall be male and female; of *fowls* after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, *two* of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive,' vi.19,20;—

whereas the later writer, who is usually called the Jehovist, from his using habitually, though not exclusively, the name 'JEHOVAH,' gives a very different version of the Divine command to Noah:—

'Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by *sevens*, the male and his female, and of beasts that are not clean by *two*, the male and his female,—of *fowls* of the air also by *sevens*, the male and the female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth,' vii.2,3.

Numerous other discrepancies and contradictions might be pointed out between the original Elohist story in Genesis, and those portions of the Book which are due to later writers. The earliest of these seems also to have followed the example of the more ancient writer, in using only 'ELOHIM' throughout the book of Genesis; but his style is so different from that of the 'Elohist,' and in many respects so closely resembles that of the 'Jehovist,' as to have given rise to the conjecture that he may be even identical with the latter, only writing in an earlier period of his life. However this may be, the main point on which I desire to fix your attention, is this, that the original Elohist story can be—in fact, has been—extracted from the Book of Genesis and the first part of Exodus, and may be read at will by any one in a continuous unbroken narrative, almost entire, in the form which it had, most probably, when first composed, from the first verse of Genesis down to the fifth verse of the sixth chapter of Exodus. After this it becomes more difficult to trace it; and it seems to have been suddenly brought originally to a close very soon after this point, or to have been removed and replaced by later passages. The rest of the matter in the

Book of Genesis and in the first chapter of Exodus is due to later writers, whose work was either meant to supplement or enlarge the original older story, or else, if written independently of it, has been introduced and woven up into one narrative with it, by some later compiler or editor. The passage of the text is one of those later additions. It is no part of the original Elohistic story; for that, as I have said, never employs the name JEHOVAH, till the account is given of its revelation to Moses in the sixth of Exodus; whereas here in the text we read,—

'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel—JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers, hath sent me unto you.'

The direct inference, which we cannot but draw at once from these phenomena, must plainly be this, that the original account of the revelation of the Name to Moses cannot have been regarded by the other writers of the Pentateuch as a statement of actual fact, historically true. If they had really believed that the Name was communicated first to Moses in this way, by a direct revelation from the Divine Being Himself, and was not even known to their fathers, it is impossible to suppose that they would have given a complete contradiction to this account, by representing it as having been used familiarly, not only by the three patriarchs, but by persons of all kinds, throughout the preceding ages, from the very beginning. This conclusion is abundantly confirmed by many other considerations, which I cannot here explain at large. It is sufficient to say that the Elohist manifestly wishes to indicate that the name JEHOVAH was unknown to the Israelites, generally, till about the time of the Exodus,—that it was not known to their fathers,—and that about that time they first became acquainted with it. Many eminent critics conclude, therefore, that Moses was the first to introduce this name into the religious worship of Israel, from whatever quarter he derived it. My own conviction is, that the Israelites first adopted this name when they had entered the land of Canaan, and found a name almost, if not quite, identical,—so similar, at all events, that Greek writers, both Christian and Heathen, express the two names by the very same Greek letters, ΙΑΩ,—in use already by the inhabitants of the land, and especially by the northern tribes, the Syro-Phœnicians, as the mysterious

name of their great Deity, the Sun, whom they regarded as the source of light and life, and whom they called YAKHVEH, ‘He Lives’ or (as some explain it) ‘He gives-life,’ just as the name of Israel’s God was YAHVEH, ‘HE IS,’ or (as some explain it) ‘He gives-being.’ The two names, you will see, differ only in sound by an aspiration in the middle; and accordingly, as I have mentioned, Greek writers represent them both by the very same Greek letters.

In this way, as it seems to me, we may best account for the fact that this ancient writer dates the first acquaintance of the Hebrews with this name from the time of the Exodus. They really, as I suppose, came first into contact with it, when they entered the land of Canaan immediately *after* the Exodus. At first, most probably, their notions of the Deity were rude and unworthy. We learn distinctly from the Book of Judges that they forsook JEHOVAH, or else defiled the worship of JEHOVAH with all manner of idolatrous practices,—that again and again they—

‘followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and served them;’—

that Gideon’s father had an altar of the BAAL, that is, ‘Lord,’ of the tribes of Canaan,—in other words, the Sun,—and Jephthah ‘offered up his only daughter as a burnt-sacrifice’ unto JEHOVAH. But, by degrees, more just ideas of the true character of the Divine Being, and of that worship which he requires of us, ‘in spirit and in truth,’ began to prevail in Israel,—not indeed among the people generally, but among the higher, nobler minds among them, such as Samuel and David, and the great prophets of that and of later ages. The common people still,—nay, most of the kings, priests, and prophets,—down even to the time of the Captivity, seem to have practised habitually the grossest idolatry, and to have introduced the vilest abominations into the very worship of JEHOVAH. As I have shown you more fully on a former occasion, by quotations from the prophet Jeremiah, it is certain that human sacrifices were offered habitually in Israel,—that, as Jeremiah tells us,—

‘they had built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire’;—

and the frequent repetition of the formula,—



'which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart'—seems to imply that they professed to have a Divine command for these practices,—that they sacrificed their children in the name of JEHOVAH. And so the prophet speaks elsewhere of the Temple itself—

'They have estranged *this place*, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, and have filled *this place* with the blood of innocents';

and so says Ezekiel, xxiii.39,—

'When they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into *my Sanctuary* to profane it, and lo, thus have they done in the midst of *my House*.'

It would seem, therefore, that after sacrificing their children in the valley of Hinnom, outside the walls of Jerusalem, they went up at once into the Temple, to join in the worship of JEHOVAH, reeking, as it were, with 'the blood of these innocents.' And many other passages very plainly show that the grossest impurities also were practised, as sacred rites, in the Temple itself, or at least within its precincts,—that foul obscene images were there set up, and vices indulged which cannot be named, D.xxiii.18, 1K.xiv.24,xv.12,2K.xxiii.7, such as Jeremiah indicates by saying, vii.30,—

'They have set their abominations in the House which is called by my name to pollute it.'

Still, all along,—from the time of Moses downwards, as many think,—at all events from the time of Samuel,—there were raised up in Israel men of higher mind and purer principles, taught by God's Spirit, enlightened by Divine Light, who strove to correct these enormous evils, and struggled manfully in God's Strength against them. The Elohist story, as I believe, was one of the first results of the attempt, on the part of these Divinely-taught men, to improve the religious condition of the people; and the later additions were made in different ages by fellow-workers in the same great work. Thus we have before us in the text the thoughts of a brother-man of those days, or one who lived, perhaps, three thousand years ago, and who was taught and enlightened by the same Divine Spirit, who is teaching now the hearts, and enlightening the eyes, of the children of men. Without receiving his words as an actual statement of historical fact, we can yet draw from them important lessons for our comfort and guidance.

We see, first, as I have just observed, that in that

primeval age, as well as now, the Divine Being was revealing Himself to men's hearts,—the Living Word was the Life and Light of men, in those days, as He is now. Mere statements of historical facts by these ancient writers would not convince us of this: while, on the other hand, their numerous inaccuracies in respect of matters of Science and History do not at all interfere with this conviction. If they had been so inspired, as to be supernaturally informed of things which had happened ages before they were born, and supernaturally protected from all possible error in what they wrote, *that* would be miraculous, indeed, something for us to wonder at, something to excite our astonishment. But it would not satisfy us that the Great Creator of the Universe, the Moral Governor of all intelligent beings, had been revealing *Himself* to his creature man,—had been dealing with his child on earth with Fatherly concern and love,—had been enabling him to understand more and more of His moral perfections. It is because we find in these ancient writings, not merely matters of Science and History, but Moral and Religious Truth—Divine, Eternal Truth—set forth to us, that we recognize the teaching of the Spirit of God. If *besides* these Divine Lessons, which come home to our hearts at once, bringing messages from God to the soul, it had pleased God to convey to us by the hands of these our fellow-men, infallibly accurate accounts of the Creation and the Deluge, of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the Exodus from Egypt and the March through the Wilderness, this would certainly have been very wonderful: we should have humbly and devoutly received these communications, and concluded that they were necessary for our life and happiness in this world and the next, and were therefore made a part of the Divine Revelation. But since, by using the powers of reason which God has given us, we find that these historical accounts, these scientific statements, are by no means accurate,—that they are *not* infallibly true,—that, on the contrary, they are demonstrably in very many respects contradicted by the facts of Science, at variance with each other, unhistorical, impossible,—we conclude that such miraculous communications as these were *not* necessary to be revealed, for our happiness here or our welfare hereafter,—that God has meant to

leave these things to be searched out by the labours of men, by the exercise of those powers with which He has gifted them,—that the Divine Revelations, contained in the Scriptures—‘the things which the Holy Ghost teacheth’—have nothing to do with such matters as these,—that in the words of Bishop Thirlwall—

The numbers, migrations, wars, battles, conquests, and reverses, of Israel, have nothing in common with the teaching of Christ, with the way of salvation, with the fruits of the Spirit.

I repeat, then, ‘in the Moral and Religious Truth contained in the Bible, and in that alone,’ as Dean Milman says, we recognize the ‘Word of God.’ But then, in recognizing this, we have the comfort of knowing that it is our Father’s Voice that we hear in the Bible,—our Father’s Voice which taught our fellow-men of former days, and through them is now teaching us. It is a comfort also to feel that we have this sign of the Existence—the Living Presence—of a Moral Governor of the Universe, in the likeness of whom we have all been made,—that all along He has been breathing by His Spirit on the hearts of men, inspiring holy thoughts, kindling divine desires, awakening eternal hopes and fears. It is a comfort thus to realize that we are all brethren of one great Family,—that, whether physically sprung from one pair of ancestors or more, we are all spiritually children of God, having the sign of our divine parentage in that seed of spiritual life, which the Spirit of God has quickened within us. It is a comfort to know that even in the ages long ago this truth was realized, that our Father is JEHOVAH, the Living God, —who ‘was and is and is to be,’ ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,’—who, whether known to them or not by that name, had been of old the ‘God of their fathers,’ as He was then their God, and who would be their children’s,—who sends in all ages His prophets unto men, and ministers to all, as He sees good, the Word of Eternal Life.

‘This is His Name for ever, and this is His Memorial unto all generations.’

## VI.

### ‘JEHOVAH THE LIVING GOD’—(*continued*).

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER’S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 18, 1866.

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#### EXODUS III. 15.

‘AND GOD SAID MOREOVER UNTO MOSES, THUS SHALT THOU SAY UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB, HATH SENT ME UNTO YOU: THIS IS MY NAME FOR EVER, AND THIS IS MY MEMORIAL UNTO ALL GENERATIONS.’

THESE words, as I explained more fully this morning, are put into the mouth of the Almighty by one of the ancient writers of the Pentateuch, as part of the solemn address to Moses out of the Burning Bush. I drew attention to the fact, that by restoring the true translation of the passage, ‘JEHOVAH, the God of your fathers,’ instead of ‘the LORD God of your fathers,’ as it stands in the English Version, the real meaning of the original is brought out into the light more distinctly, whereas it is otherwise quite obscured. JEHOVAH, the ‘Self-Existing Being’—for that is the interpretation of the name—JEHOVAH, the ‘Living God’—He had been the ‘God of their fathers,’ and He will now be their God, as He will be their children’s—the same faithful and gracious Being—‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’

This whole section about the ‘Burning Bush’ is, as I observed, a later addition to the original story of the Pentateuch; as is indicated by the fact that in this verse, and in other verses of the section, the name ‘JEHOVAH’ is used, though it is not expressed at all in the English Version, but is represented by the word LORD, in capital letters,—which name the *oldest* writer of the Pentateuch never employs in his narrative, until he has announced in the sixth

chapter of Exodus the revelation of it by God Himself to Moses. Besides which, this whole section, about the 'Bush,' when closely examined with a critical eye, gives unmistakable evidences of a style very different from that of the more ancient primary document, which forms the foundation of the whole story of the Pentateuch. It is impossible in these days, as I said, to believe that this document is historically true—that the Almighty God did really 'call unto Moses out of the midst of the bush,' and hold this discourse with him,—any more than we can suppose that, as recorded in the Book of Job, the Divine Being talked familiarly with Satan in the Courts of Heaven, or uttered in the ears of Job and his friends that sublime Hebrew poetry, which we find towards the end of that Book. But there are still precious lessons to be drawn from the text before us, as I endeavoured to show in some measure this morning. We have here the evidence of a Divine Thought, conceived in the heart of a fellow-man of other days by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We have here the signs that 3000 years ago, as now, the Eternal Father was caring for His children upon earth, was instructing, enlightening, guiding, and blessing them. We have here the proof of one and the selfsame Spirit breathing on men's hearts then, as He who is breathing on our hearts now. We have a token here of the essential unity of the human race in all ages, in all countries and climes, of our common brotherhood with all the members of the great human family, as children of God, having the same spiritual birth, in whom the same Divine Word is dwelling, who is the Light and Life of men. And we have here a recognition that so it shall be unto the end—that 'the God of our fathers' is He who is with us now, and shall be to all eternity. Let us consider more closely some of these points this evening—some of those practical lessons which the words of the text will yield to us, when viewed in the strongest light of Modern Criticism.

When the Preacher of old, in the book of Ecclesiastes, watching in deep thought the course of the life of men, saw one thing after another fading out of it, and the men themselves, one generation after another, passing away, he might well exclaim,—

‘Vanity of vanities ! all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour, which he taketh under the sun ? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh ; but the earth abideth for ever.’

Many others have drawn the like inference, and not unnaturally, that it is useless for so transitory a being to occupy himself—at least, to weary his heart out—for any object, however vast it may seem, however bright. It seems as if, like the moth in the flame, he must only perish in any high endeavour, without being able to attain any lasting joy or glory, seeing that he himself passes so quickly away. Nay, the very earth, of which that ancient Jewish philosopher said, as we have just heard it, ‘abideth for ever,’—the hills which in the language of Hebrew poetry were called ‘everlasting,’—we, with our knowledge of the results of Modern Science, have learned to look upon, as in a state of slow, but ceaseless, change.

There rolls the deep, where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes thou hast seen !  
There, where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands ;  
Like clouds they shape themselves, and go.

There are some also who suppose that the *religion* of man, like all things else which belong to him, has been ever changing too,—that one creed after another has passed away, and the living faith of one century has been an object of mere curiosity,—or even of wonder and pity,—to succeeding ones, like the mummied kings of ancient Egypt in the museums of the nineteenth century. We are told that we may hold our beliefs with a lax hand, for they are but temporary, and our children’s children will *know better* than to retain them.

Here, however, we must make a stand. ‘Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever !’ We say with all our hearts—with all the energy and hope of our being—

God of our fathers ! be our God,  
And all our children own !

From before the earliest beginnings, of which any trace has come down to us—before history without date—the worship of human kind has been rising, still higher and

higher, as knowledge has increased by the gift of God. Even the old Aurignac caves in the south of France, where rude works of human art have been recently found, mixed up with the bones of extinct animals, give evidence of some religious feeling, of some faint spark of a belief in another life. As one of our great living geologists (Sir Charles Lyell) has said, *Antiquity of Man*, p.193,—

If the fossil memorials have been correctly interpreted,—if we have before us at the northern base of the Pyrenees a sepulchral vault with skeletons of human beings, consigned by friends and relations to their last resting-place,—if we have also, at the portal of the tomb, the relics of funeral feasts, and within it indications of viands destined for the use of the departed on their way to a land of spirits, while among the funeral gifts are weapons wherewith in other fields to chase the gigantic deer, the cave-lion, the cave-bear, and the woolly rhinoceros,—we have at last succeeded in tracing back the sacred rites of burial, and, more interesting still, a belief in a future state, to times long anterior to those of history and tradition.

From that time to this, the light has been increasing, the knowledge of God has become more bright and clear. But 'can man by mere *searching* find out God? Can we find out the Almighty to perfection?' We may discern in this way proofs of His Wisdom and Power; but shall we find revelations of His Truth and Holiness, of His Fatherly relations to us, as children made in His own moral likeness, after His image,—shall we find such revelations as these—

in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,—  
Or through the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun?

No! truly, such knowledge as this is 'higher than heaven,—what canst thou know? deeper than hell,—what canst thou do?' And yet it is indisputable that, by some means or other, Man's thoughts concerning God *have* become more just and exalted, his worship more worthy, as the world has grown older. We must acknowledge, therefore,—and we do it with a joyful sense of His Fatherly Love to us,—that God has been pleased to reveal Himself gradually to the Mind of Man,—gradually as regards the race at large, but in such bright flashes and clearer glimpses to his prophets in different ages, as may have put them as individuals far above the level of their own or succeeding generations,—as the mountain-tops are bright with the morning, while the vales and plains still sleep in the shade.

And so in these most ancient writings, the work, no doubt, of some great prophets of the times in which they lived, we find enshrined already that one great central idea,—the idea of JEHOVAH, the One Only Living and True God. It is true, the earlier writers of the Pentateuch do not seem yet to have grasped the grand truth, that there is but one God. They still seem to speak rather of the pre-eminence of JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, above other gods. Thus Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, is made to say, E.xviii.11—

'I know that JEHOVAH is greater than all gods'; and elsewhere such words as these are put into the mouth of JEHOVAH Himself,—

'Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am JEHOVAH.' E.xii.12, N.xxxiii.4.

It is the Deuteronomist, writing in the far later days of king Josiah, who speaks distinctly of there being only one God :—

'Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that JEHOVAH He is God; *there is none else beside Him*,' iv.25;

'Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that JEHOVAH He is God, in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; *there is none else*,' iv.39.

But JEHOVAH was still the only True and *Living* God—the God of their fathers, the God of themselves and their children in all days,—even if at first they believed that the gods of the nations had some real temporary existence, some power to strengthen and support their own people, though utterly inferior to that of the God of Israel. That idea was there already in the hearts of those old Hebrew prophets; and, as time rolled on, it became more clearly developed in their minds, and more distinctly expressed in their religious teachings. The superstitious notions, which may have at first gathered round it, fell away by their dead weight at last, having become by accretion too unwieldy, too contradictory to common-sense,—in other words, to reason, which is but the common-sense itself of human beings in its highest aspect. All that the deepest thought, the most extended knowledge, can now do, will be to exhibit that central fact as more awfully true, more radiantly clear. It is that fact of the Presence of the Living God in the Universe, a Personal Being to whom we are all related, that alone gives a meaning, a consistency, to this confused



dream of life. In the light of it, life is no longer a dream, but a reality. In His Light we see Light. The Eternal God is a refuge for us.

But to find it so clearly expressed in this ancient volume is sufficient to make us acknowledge the roll, which contains it, as something indeed venerable and sacred, the writing in some sort of God himself. Here we see that our God was indeed the 'God of our fathers'—not truly of our fathers in the flesh, but of our spiritual fathers, of those to whom we owe under God so much of that religious light and life which we now enjoy. What dutiful son of a worthy parentage does not feel a solace in the words 'our fathers'! How natural it is to prize an heirloom! Who does not love to trace his own life back as far as possible, and, if any honour or merit belongs, any distinction attaches, to an ancestry, to cover perhaps his own solitary weakness and insignificance with the thought of belonging to such a family! The large lands, which some possess in this country of our adoption, have no such charm. Perhaps, we console ourselves with the thought, that they may possess it for our descendants. But 'the God of our fathers!'—here is an inheritance indeed for us. We did not earn it for ourselves: it is not one of the discoveries of the age: yet what would any discoveries be without it? It has come down to us from a remote antiquity, gathering strength and depth and clearness with the ages as they have rolled on. It has been, as it were, the backbone of every mighty creed. The worship of 'our fathers,' I repeat, may have been mixed with much superstition. They may have often misunderstood and misinterpreted the voice within them, as when they tortured and burned witches or heretics in God's honour. Yet they did come to see clearly that there was One above, whose laws they are bound to obey, who was a refuge for the oppressed, a hearer of prayer, a living lawgiver and king, yes, and to some more favoured ones a Father. And their belief is so far ours, though we have been enabled, with the clearer, fuller light vouchsafed to us, to see through many false notions which they held respecting Him, to claim His Paternal Care and Love for us all; we have learnt to know that—

'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,'—

not with outward observances, or with censure and judgment of others, but with purity of heart and life, in the spirit of truthfulness and love,—'for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.'

There are some, however, who, when they look out into the world around them, and see a system of balanced forces, working under inexorable laws,—the stupendous mechanism of the heavens, the wonderful dynamics of the earth,—have been led to think that they see no necessary place there for a Great Artificer,—for a supreme Unity combining and harmonizing all these manifold powers. At least, they maintain that the Soul of the World is not a Person, hears no prayers, knows no individuals. In this way they confuse God and Nature, or rather they acknowledge the latter alone. But there may be another who looks through Nature in search for a Living God,—and yet finds only a great vital principle, not a Person. He notes what he observes, compares and judges, and comes to the conclusion that the Laws, by which the Universe is bound, are no certain proof of the existence of a personal Lawgiver. His heart, perhaps, faintly condemns him for his decision. But he rejects the reproof, as a mere echo of the superstition of the multitude, who shrink at the name of Pantheism,—that is, a Divine Influence pervading all Nature,—and call it Atheism, branding one, as well as the other, as a crime, and associating it with the worst impiety and immorality. His heart indeed may condemn him, but yet will acquit him again in the consciousness of pure intentions, of an upright and innocent life, of love for his kind, and a passionate thirst for truth.

And what are these but the actings of something more than a mere vital principle, of something higher than mere instinctive vitality, of something which differs altogether in kind from the simple exercise of the vital powers of the most perfectly complete and beautiful being, gifted with the keenest senses to perceive most distinctly, to reflect most exquisitely, the glory and beauty of the outward world? What are these but the signs that a *person* is here,—that this philosopher, the man himself, who thus thinks and reasons, and justifies or condemns himself, is not a mere

living organism, but a personal being, a living will. If, then, when a person, a spirit, appears upon the scene,—if in the presence of Man, endowed with reason and will,—all mere external, visible, and sensible things, the very heavens and the earth, become at once comparatively insignificant, only the furniture of his dwelling, and all mere animals his subjects and servants,—if each living will stands not alone, but is one of a countless family, each different, yet all essentially alike,—how is it possible to escape from the thought, that there must be One, the Fount of Personality, the Father of spirits, as well as the Maker of the Heavens and the Earth? As mere mechanical forces will not suffice to explain the phenomena of vitality,—as there must be a principle of life to account for the existence of a living organism,—so no blind instinct, no mere vital energies, can account for the existence of spiritual beings, of living wills endowed with conscience and with reason,—nothing but the actual Presence of a Living Will above all wills, the Presence of JEHOVAH, the Living God.

But the same thought, which links us with the past and with the present, gives us also a hold on the future. Such is the Lesson which our great Teacher himself draws from this title of our God.

'He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; for *all* live unto Him.'

The link, which binds man to his God, is man's surest pledge of immortality. Our God, our chief good, so faintly perceived, so feebly grasped, so little glorified,—His Throne is 'eternal in the heavens'; and the spiritual life, which we derive from Him, and which seems here but a beginning, is a promise to our hearts of its own continuance. For, if we love God, or even aspire after Him, after His Love, is not that desire itself an effect of His Love to us? And will He then cast away Man, His chief work, unfinished, scarcely begun, while all lower things attain their perfection? As one has said, (Addison)—

How can it enter into the thoughts of man, that the soul which is capable of such immense perfections, and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, shall fall away into nothing almost as soon as it is created? Are such abilities made for no purpose? A brute arrives at a point of perfection that he can never pass in a few years: he has all the endowments he is capable of, and, were he to live ten thousand more, would be the same thing he is at present. Were the human

soul thus at a stand in her accomplishments, were her faculties to be full-blown, as it were, and incapable of further enlargements, I could imagine it might fall away insensibly, and drop at once into a state of annihilation. But can we believe that a thinking being, that is in a perpetual progress of improvements, and travelling on from perfection to perfection, after having just looked abroad into the works of its Creator, and made a few discoveries of His Infinite Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, must perish at his first setting out, and in the very beginning of his inquiries?

‘All live unto Him’—the Living God. ‘Our fathers’ still live, though their place on earth knows them no more; and we, when we are ‘gathered to our fathers,’ as the old Hebrew phrase was,—though they used it only of being gathered into the grave, and had not yet attained the clear vision of immortal life,—shall not be scattered to the winds, and extinguished like the flame of the taper, but be safely lodged, like precious grain, in the treasury of God. Such is the hope, full of immortality, which is brought to light by the Gospel of Christ, and assured to us by the sense of our relationship to God. It cannot be proved by mathematical demonstration or logical argument. It is beyond the sphere of research and scientific discovery. It is a faith of the heart; but it is a certainty to those whose hearts are full of Divine Love.

Once more, there has always been a conflict between the idea of the *Majesty* of the Divine Being and the need of the human heart for His intervention on behalf of men. ‘What is man, that Thou art mindful of him,’ says the Psalmist, ‘or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?’ Yet in the Jewish History, the ‘Living God’ appears from time to time upon the scene, saving or judging, as the case requires. This was the natural form which the belief would take in primitive times, in the minds of a rude people. And, though to us the narratives often appear what we term ‘anthropomorphic,’ ascribing human limitation to Divine actions, making a God in man’s image, they yet contain, as a kernel, a deep truth, which we are in danger, perhaps, of losing,—this, namely, that God is ever with us, that our lives, and the life of the race, which is History, do not go on independently of Him, as our faithless hearts are too apt to suppose,—that we are only not to say *this* or *that* is God’s doing,—*here* we see the Providence of God interfering,—simply because this would be to exempt other events

from the same overruling Hand, and because our vision is too limited to enable us to judge rightly of any detached part of the great whole.

But the 'Living God' has never at any time left Himself without witness in the world. He has never, like the Baal of Elijah's day, been asleep or absent from His own creation. Every breaking forth of light among the nations—of light intellectual or spiritual—has been direct from Him—the light of the present age, as well as that of all former ages. And so, too, not once or twice only, but often in the history of man, when the worship of God as a Spirit, as a Moral Governor, has been obscured more and more by sensuous rites and theories, limiting His claims and degrading His worshippers, the light has broken forth again in the mind of some divinely-inspired man, and He, 'with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning,' has 'made all things new.'

Those who feel themselves called—as what true man is not in his measure?—to stand up and witness for the Truth before their fellow-men, as opportunity is given them, may feel a calm assurance that their labour will not be in vain, their cause cannot be lost, for it is the cause of God. Sooner or later, but at the right, the very best, moment, He will make it plain. He has not left His servants to fight for Him, to manage His concerns, in His absence. He lives; He is here. If we speak for Him, let us do it as in His hearing; if we work for Him, let us do it as in His sight, in humble confidence that He, who sees the heart, will accept our intention, will make our imperfect witness, though it should be mixed with error, and enfeebled by mistake, serve in the end His Cause, the Cause of Truth, the Cause of Holiness, the Cause of Mankind.

And now, as in former times, again and again, the 'letter which killeth' is striving for ascendancy over the living spirit of faith and love. The way which Jesus had made so open and so plain for us all into the holiest, into the very presence of the Father, is being obstructed again by the attempt to clothe the Christian ministry with priestly attributes, to interpose between the soul and God a spiritual caste, who hold in their hands certain mystic keys, or sacraments of grace, without which the gate is locked into God's nearer Presence, and only the priest can open it,—

to give us an idol to worship in the Sacrament of the Altar, instead of a Presence, the Presence of the Living God, which fills all space, but dwells especially in the pure and lowly and loving heart,—to make holiness something artificial and extraneous to human life, instead of being humanity itself in its fullest perfection.

No mere protests or denials will deliver us from this idolatry—this superstitious corruption of Christianity—'a system,' as a great writer (Dr Arnold) says—

in which few shall be active, and the great mass passive,—in which vital heat is to be maintained, not by the even circulation of the blood through every limb, through the healthy co-operation of the arteries and veins of every part, but by external rubbing and chafing,—

in which, as he also says, there is attempted to be maintained—

a pretended distinction between spiritual things and secular,—a distinction utterly without foundation, since in one sense all things are secular, for they are done in time and on earth, in another all things are spiritual, for they affect us morally either for the better or the worse, and so tend to make our spirits fitter for the society of God or his enemies.

And he truly adds, (*The Church*, p.13)—

The division rests entirely on principles of heathenism, and tends to make Christianity, like the religions of the old world, not a sovereign discipline for every part and act of life, but a system for communicating certain abstract truths, and for the performance of certain visible rites and ceremonies.

Only real faith in a Living Present God will drive away this and all other fetishisms,—a strengthening, comforting, solemnizing, purifying faith,—a faith like that which St Paul himself cherished, and which he teaches us to cherish when he says—

'Ye are the temple of the Living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

## VII.

### THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1866.

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PHIL. II. 5-8.

'LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS: WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD; BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN; AND, BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLIED HIMSELF, AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.'

'LET this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' With these words St Paul sums up and enforces his earnest exhortation to the Philippian Christians that they would live in love with one another, 'in brotherly-kindness, perfering one another, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.'

'If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.'

And our Church brings before us this passage at this time, when we are called more especially to consider the sufferings of Christ and the glory that has followed. These words are the watchword, as it were, which is given us, that we may come in the right spirit to consider the great subject of Passion-Week, and to celebrate the joy of Easter-Day.

'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' As I observed on a former occasion, we cannot indeed find

in the separate actions of our Lord's life on earth an example to be followed in every separate action of our own lives. There are innumerable circumstances, in which as men and women we may find ourselves, for which no type can be found in the Gospel narratives. But the 'mind that was in Christ,' the spirit which was the ruling principle of his life, must be cherished continually—must grow more and more—in us, if we would please God,—if we would be true followers of Christ, the 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.'

The text before us directs our attention especially to one characteristic of that 'mind which was in Christ'—his humility and condescension, his readiness to become a servant, to make himself of no reputation, if so he might do the Will of God, and be the minister of light and life to the children of men,—his willingness, at God's command, for declaring His Name and bearing witness to the Truth, to be brought to the lowest depths of shame and sorrow, to 'become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

'Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.'

The Apostle cannot, of course, mean to say that our Lord existed in Heaven with human body and soul, before he was born on earth of his human mother. But he does mean to say that in him, whom he elsewhere calls 'the man Christ Jesus,' the Eternal Word, who is the Light and Life of men,—who 'was with God,' who 'was God,' as St John tells us—or, as St Paul says in the text, 'who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God,'—language, with which the human mind, in its imperfect forms of speech, tries to express the glimpses which have been vouchsafed to it into the mysteries of the Divine Nature,—in him, I say, that Living Word was dwelling, and showed forth transcendentally the Divine condescension and grace. He does mean to assert that the words and acts of Jesus,—his pure and loving life, his tender pity and compassion, his holy hatred of sin, and yet his yearning love for the sinner, his truthfulness, his faithfulness even unto death—were exhibiting continually



the brightness of his Father's character. In his whole life long our Lord Jesus Christ was thus manifesting his Father to us, as John the Baptist said,—

'He, whom God sent, speaketh *the words of God*: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him,'—  
as Christ himself said,—

'My doctrine is not mine, but *His that sent me*,'—

'I do nothing of myself, but, *as my Father hath taught me*, I speak these things,'—

'I have not spoken of myself, but *the Father, which sent me, He gave me Commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak*,'—

'Whatsoever I speak, therefore, *even as the Father hath said unto me*, so I speak,'—

'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but *the Father, that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works*.'

It was the Father, then, who by the Living Word was dwelling in him, that did all the works that Jesus did,—those works of grace, and tender pity, and love; it was the Father, that spoke by his lips those words of life, by which our spirits are quickened and gladdened. In 'the likeness of men,' in 'the form of a servant,' in a lowly, humble form, in the person of Jesus, the Father's Love was manifested continually, enduring the weakness, the foolishness, the sinfulness, of men,—compassionating the sorrowful and suffering, the fallen and out-cast, the sin-stricken and sin-oppressed,—embracing the returning prodigal,—seeking and saving that which was lost. Every word which Jesus spoke, declaring God's Truth and publishing His Grace to the children of men, was a word from God, an utterance of the Living Word, a manifestation of our Father's Love. Every act of Christ, in which he soothed the sorrows or relieved the sufferings of man, was an act which he did in his Father's Name and as manifesting forth his Father's character:—

'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'

And still to the end the 'mind that was in Christ' was showing forth the mind of God. It was the 'Father that dwelt in him,'—that did not forsake him, when for a moment he thought he was forsaken, as he hung on the accursed tree and cried—

'My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?'

It was the Living Word, that was the Light and Life of *his* soul, as a Son of Man, as He is also the Light and Life

of the souls of us, his brethren,—that strengthened him to ‘glorify God on earth, to finish the work which He had given him to do,’ by being ‘obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,’ that enabled him to ‘endure the cross, and despise the shame,’ till he cried, ‘It is finished!’

And this is the example which is set before us to-day:—

‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.’

Let us consider in what sense these words will apply to us. And here, let us remember that our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in the Scripture as the type of living men, the Elder Brother of us all; as St John says,—

‘Because as he is, so are we in this world,’—

or as the apostle to the Hebrews writes,—

‘It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, [all children of one Father,]—for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, “I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church I will sing praise unto Thee,”—and again, “I will put my trust in Him,” [like any other of the sons of men,]—and again, “Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”’

And hence we are told that the same Divine Word, who dwelt among us, in the person of Jesus Christ, manifesting forth the glorious brightness of the Father’s character,—the same who ‘was with God,’ and who ‘was God,’ who ‘was in the beginning with God,’ ‘by whom all things were made,’ and ‘without whom was not anything made that was made,’—is also the Light and Life of men, and ‘lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.’ He is the Light, therefore, and the Life, of all Humanity: the Living Word, the Eternal God, condescends to dwell in the hearts of men.

Applied, indeed, to the Divine Word, such expressions as these, which speak of His condescension—His humiliation or His exaltation—are obviously improper. The Infinite can neither be high nor low; for these are merely terms of relation, and cannot be used with reference to Him, who is beyond all comparison or comprehension. Nothing to Him is mean or little; nothing can add to the sublime glories of His Throne, can bring glory to His Infinite Majesty. But to us, in our limited sphere, it seems incredible that the Creator of this stupendous Universe, which swallows us up, as it were, in its vastness, should

concern Himself about such a creature as man. It would, at least, seem incredible, if we did not see that the same Power which built the heavens is occupied around us with infinitesimal creatures which we despise,—the end or meaning of whose existence is beyond the ken of our reason,—if we did not see that the heart and lungs of the animalcule are as curiously and completely fashioned as those of the gigantic elephant, or of man himself. Our reason, in fact, like a lantern, throws but a feeble glance into space, and only sheds a clear light upon the narrow path we have ourselves to walk in.

To our eyes, then, the indwelling of the Divine Word in a human being—in each one of us—must appear as an act of the greatest imaginable humiliation, as one of amazing condescension and grace. It seems to us most strange that He should ‘be in the world,’ the world that was ‘made by Him,’ and yet that the world should ‘know Him not’—that He should ‘come unto His own,’ and yet His own ‘receive Him not.’ Surely, we might think, the Eternal Son of God, the Living Word, if He comes to dwell among men, must *reign* over them, must be recognized at once—must be acknowledged by them all—as their Lord and King,—must at any rate not be exposed, when He visits the hearts of men, to rejection, insult, contradiction, contempt. And, indeed, He *is* recognized oftentimes, as the only rightful Lord of our inner being, even when he may not be acknowledged and obeyed. Men hear His Voice speaking within them; in His Light they see light, showing them their path of duty, that they may walk in it; and they know that they ought to obey that gracious Voice, that they ought to walk in that Divine Light; and yet they turn aside into the by-paths of sin; they reject, and grieve, and contradict their Living Lord; they ‘sow unto the flesh,’ and ‘of the flesh reap corruption.’

And He endures it still, as He did of old, in the person of the man Christ Jesus, ‘who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.’ Our God and Father is still pitiful, patient, long-suffering, ‘not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.’ The ‘mind which was in Christ,’—the same Divine Mind, of Fatherly, forgiving mercy, of boundless grace, combined with a holy abhorrence of sin and a perfect love of right-

eousness, which was manifested so brightly in all the words and works of Jesus,—is still being manifested to the children of men. And God's Will is, that we shall manifest it daily to one another, as children of God, as members of Christ, as heirs of the kingdom of heaven. He wills that we shall be 'likeminded towards one another, with brotherly love,'—'being of one accord, of one mind,'—that we shall 'do nothing through strife or vainglory, but each in lowliness of mind esteem other better than himself,'—that we shall 'look not every man on his own things only, but every man also on the things of others,'—that, in one word, 'this mind shall be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus.'

It is of little use that we keep Good Friday in the Church,—that we set before us the agony, the scourge, the crown of thorns, and the bloody cross,—if we do not seek to grow in this spirit,—if we do not learn by Christ's example to be more meek and gentle and forbearing, more patient under insults, more forbearing under injuries, more obedient to our Father's Will in witnessing His Truth, and ministering, as servants, when God shall give us the call and the opportunity, to the wants of others, bodily and spiritual. Yet, where in this gaudy world, amongst these noisy, jarring interests, these violent passions, of men, each striving for the first place, and pushing others down, shall we look for the true followers of Jesus, for the church of the crucified, for the body whose head and leader wore the crown of thorns? How many worship the very wood of the cross, and yet are impatient of the least insult, the least reflection upon themselves, and hold themselves aloof from others whom they regard as their inferiors? Yet the same Divine Lord, who manifested in Jesus His Glory—the Glory of perfect love, obedience, self-sacrifice,—is the Light and Life of each one of us, and will dwell and walk in us, if we will receive Him into our hearts,—will cast out for us the evil spirits of selfishness and pride and lust, which have tormented us,—will lighten and quicken us, that we may live as becomes the children of God.

'Behold! I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

And now the cross, from an instrument of barbarous

tyranny, has become the symbol of a truly human life. When we name it, we think not now so much of the mere material object, with all its revolting accessories. The true Christian spirit will not desire to have the feelings harrowed with descriptions of the bloody scene,—of the rent flesh and the gaping wounds,—those sensuous images, which abound in many modern hymns, but whose effect upon the mind is merely superficial and sensational, not deep, enduring, and practical. But our ideas of the cross, as the symbol of the Christian life, will be gathered around the thought of the meekness, patience, love, displayed in the death of our Lord,—in the forgiveness of his enemies, in his care for others, and in his calm, confiding trust in his Heavenly Father, the more real—the more instructive, as an example—because the consciousness of the Divine Support seemed for a time to be withdrawn from him. That ‘mind which was in Christ’ we must seek to exercise at all times—not merely in the time of extreme suffering; we must show it forth in our daily life. For in active life, even more than in a season of weakness and helplessness, we need to remember such truths and principles of life as these,—that the Living God is with us, and He must sit, as Lord and King, upon the throne of our being,—that, with all our powers, we are but God’s servants, stewards for all around of His manifold gifts,—that, as God’s servants, we are in God’s hand, and not our wilfulness, but His Will, must be our rule,—that, even if that Will shall lead us through grief and shame, we must be obedient, even unto death,—that the opposition and contradiction, yea, even the hatred, of our fellow-men, when we meet with it in the path of our duty, must be patiently endured by us, as by those who count themselves as nothing—‘of no reputation,’—provided only God’s work may be done by us.

The ‘cross,’ then, reminds us that no earthly circumstances can ever defile or deform that which is truly good and beautiful,—that which is truly divine cannot be degraded by any accidents of this life, while only it remains true to itself. It reminds us of our high calling, as children of the Living God, to be victorious not only over death, but over suffering, over shame, victorious to bear them, unmoved from our spirits’ pedestal of trust in God and love to our fellow-men. Suffering in itself does not

generate these graces. There are men, we know, who have died, blaspheming God, and cursing men, and defying both in pride and scorn. Such men were not victors ; nor does the victory, which is symbolized by the cross, consist in a sour and sullen passiveness under the sorrows of life or of death. An iron will—unbent—unbendable—is something doubtless great and admirable. But it is not sufficient to make a follower of Jesus, a Christian martyr. Only in the firm belief in God's Love can the cross be borne in the spirit of Christ,—a belief that the God of Love is our Father, and the Father also of our enemies and persecutors, though they ' know not what they do.'

But the same spirit, which bears this fruit in the hour of suffering, will make those who are possessed by it full of active service for others in the time of their life and power. It is love which makes all labour light, and ennoble the least and meanest work. Can those despise any, who have learned to look on every human being as the offspring of God, as amongst those on whose behalf ' Christ died ' ? Thus, for those who take account of the fact that we are all taught of God,—that one Divine Word is the Light and Life of men,—that by that Word every living man is lightened, and all Humanity is partaking thus in the Divine,—for such as these, the humiliation to which they may submit themselves, in stooping to the ignorance, the weakness, the wretchedness, nay, even the sinfulness, of their fellow-men,—in sharing the lot of the lowly and despised, the heathen and the savage, the outcasts of society, the sunken and forlorn—in ' eating and drinking with publicans and sinners,'—all this for them is no degradation ; they will remember that the powers which are confided to the individual, are given to him for the sake of the whole family of God.

Some, indeed, there are, who seem to think that the Divinity is in danger of being approached sacrilegiously, and holy things of being profaned, unless they raise a kind of fence around them, of creeds and sacraments, of temples and altars and priests, to keep the profane world at a distance. They talk of ' the Church '—that is, their own small circle—as being holy and sacred, and ' the World '—not the worldly spirit, or those in whom the spirit of worldliness is ruling, whether within the Church or out of it—

but the world of their fellow-men, who do not exactly adopt their views upon religion, or utter their own peculiar shibboleths—as ‘lying in wickedness,’ cut off from the heritage of God’s children. How little do these know of the true dignity of Human Nature, as in every man partaking of the Divine!—or of the purifying power of Divine Love, which in the heart of Jesus found room for the poor miserable despised Publican, smiting upon his breast and saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ rather than for the self-righteous Pharisee, who ‘fasted twice in the week, and gave tithes of all that he possessed!’ How little do they consider that what is most Divine in man is that which is most human, most like unto ‘the mind which was in Christ Jesus,’—is that which brings a man more closely into union with his fellows, sympathizing with their woes, pitying their ignorance, ‘taking their infirmities, bearing their sicknesses!’ How little do they perceive that to be *separate* is not the same as to be *holy*,—is not the same as to be ‘separate from sinners, harmless, undefiled,’—that the members of an exclusive church, or of a priestly caste, are less likely to be holy than others, as being more likely to be exalted in their own eyes! The religion of Jesus, of which the cross is the symbol,—the religion of love to God as a Father, of love to all men as brethren, by virtue of that Divine birth, in respect of our moral nature, by which we are begotten in the image of God,—needs no such apparatus of artificial sanctity. The selfish nature—the self-exalting heart—is wholly alien from ‘the mind which was in Jesus’; wherever it may be found, it cannot enter into the deep innermost mysteries of the spiritual kingdom. The priest, or the religious person, set apart by the most tremendous outward ceremonies, may be in his heart impure. The simplest child, the weakest woman, who trusts, believes, and loves, is robed in that ‘white linen, which is the righteousness of saints,’ the true baptismal robe, the priestly garb, of the new covenant.

There is one feature more of the ‘mind which was in Christ,’ which the apostle indeed does not directly refer to in the text, though he does, in fact, bring this also into view in the words which follow the text, and which, if it please God, we will consider more fully next Sunday,—

‘Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name

which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father';—

I mean, the calm confidence in which our Lord pursued the work, which God had given him to do upon earth, assured that the seed of life would grow which he had planted, that the sorrow of his followers would be turned into joy, that the hour of darkness, which seemed to other eyes the sign of disappointment and failure, was only the last hour of night before the breaking of a glorious day. Believing this most surely, when all around seemed full of gloom and despair, he calmly bowed his head and said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

Disappointment, we know, is proverbially the lot of man. How many years of labour, to build up a fortune, a house, a name, are often made futile by one calamity! Or, if they bear their fruit, a rich harvest of wealth and honour, crowds of dependents, troops of friends, yet every now and then in secret the heart sickens over it all, and subscribes to the saying of the wise man of old, 'Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!'

But labours of love—a life of such labours—can never be futile. What is spent on self and selfish ends bears on it the stamp of death,—of isolation, which is death: it is spent and lost, and lives no more, entering as an element into the lives of others. But what is done out of love—eminently, what is done out of love to the Eternal, and to man, as His child, His image,—is redeemed from the vanity of earthly things. A deep peace, the very peace of Jesus, which he left to his true followers, attends those who spend and are spent in the service of their God, which is nothing else than the service of their kind.

'Steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, they know that their labour will not be in vain in the Lord.'

Sorrow they must feel: by suffering they too must be perfected, and fill up, each in his measure, 'that which remains behind of the afflictions of Christ,'—that so the great sacrifice, offered from all humanity, through the power of the Indwelling Word,—that sacrifice of which the sacrifice of Calvary is the type and great example,—may rise up to Heaven as a sweet-smelling savour, 'holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.'



Much alloy there must be in all they think and do,—the alloy of self, which ever tends to mix in all things human; and this may sometimes cloud their minds with discouragement, with what seems almost to be disappointment and even despair. But the breath of God's Spirit will soon clear away those clouds; and they will be able to rest in peace in the thought of Him, who is over all, who sees their hearts, who knows their work, and to whom their fellow-men, for whom they labour, are precious, more precious than to themselves. To be 'fellow-workers with God' is to be without chance of failure. For, what seems failure to us, we must believe, though we see it not, is part of His Divine Plan for bringing good out of evil, and 'making all things work together for good to them that love Him.'

And let us bear in mind especially one word in the text in the prospect of such trials. It is the word 'obedient': 'he became obedient unto death.' Oh the comfort of that word!—the lesson taught us by our Lord's 'obedience'! He did not call evil good, and the cup sweet, which he found so bitter. He did not say that misery—pain—death—was desirable in itself, because God willed it. But he 'became obedient.' He would have had the cup pass from him, if God had so willed: for indeed it was a bitter sorrow to drink it; it was an evil cup, and mingled by the hands of evil men; but he 'became obedient,' and drank to the dregs what his Father's hand held out to him.

May we have grace to be thus obedient, whenever our own time of trial shall come! May 'this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus!' Of course, in the strongest sense of these words,—in that sense in which Apostles and Martyrs of old have been made 'the filth of the world' and 'the offscouring of all things,' yet showed forth 'the mind which was in Christ' through all, in their obedience even unto death, often a cruel, bloody death, like that of their Lord,—in such a sense as this, there is no present prospect of these words being ever applicable to the case of any one of us. Yet, probably, very few true Christians pass to their journey's end without some kindred trial of their faith and patience,—without some bitter cup to drink,—without being called upon, at some time or other, in some way or other, to show forth 'the mind

which was in Christ,' by being ready, in obedience to God's Will, to suffer pain or shame, or it may be, the loss of something which is dear to them even as life itself. Are we indeed ready for this? I trust that by God's grace we are, or shall be ready, whenever that time of trial shall come. And, though we cry from the sense of human weakness, as our Lord by his life and by his own example has taught us to cry,—‘Father, lead us not into temptation—lead us not into this trial—let this cup, if possible, pass from us,’—yet may we also learn to say with him,—‘Not our will, O Thou Good and Wise, but Thine be done! Only, if it be Thy Will that we should pass through this sorrow, do Thou ‘deliver us from evil’—help us to be obedient—trustful—submissive,—until, having shared ‘the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ,’ and been ‘made conformable unto his death,’ we shall also ‘know the power of his resurrection’—being ‘raised up together’ with him, and ‘made to sit together’ with him, even in this life, ‘in heavenly places.’

## VIII.

### THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1866.

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HEB. v. 7—10.

'WHO IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, WHEN HE HAD OFFERED UP PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS WITH STRONG CRYING AND TEARS UNTO HIM THAT WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIM FROM DEATH, AND WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED, THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED, AND, BEING MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM, CALLED OF GOD AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.'

I HAVE mentioned in a former discourse that it is considered very doubtful whether this epistle to the Hebrews was really written by the apostle Paul, to whom it is ascribed in our English Bibles. On this point the chief living authority upon the Canon of the New Testament tells us, (Westcott, p.418):—

The Alexandrine Fathers uniformly recognized the epistle to the Hebrews as possessed of Apostolic authority, if not indeed as the work of St Paul. The early Latin Fathers [for nearly four centuries, down, indeed, to Hilary, A.D. 368,] with equal unanimity either exclude it from the Canon, or ignore its existence.

But, whoever wrote it, it is admitted that he was one deeply imbued with that mixture of Jewish and Greek philosophy, which was especially cultivated in the schools of Alexandria, and have found their expression most notably in the writings of Philo, the learned Jew, who lived in the apostolic age. A part of that system was the habit of interpreting mystically or allegorically the passages of history recorded in the Old Testament, of which we had an instance a Sunday or two ago, in St Paul's mode of explaining the story of Sarah and Hagar in the book of Genesis:—

'It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. . . . Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children; but Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.'

Similar language is used in the epistle to the Hebrews:—  
'Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.'

And, indeed, the circumstance, that in this epistle so many facts, recorded in the Old Testament, are explained mystically with reference to the state of things under the Gospel, is one argument for supposing that it was actually written by St Paul, who was evidently versed, by reason of his learned Jewish education, in this kind of lore.

However this may be, we have here in the text another example of this kind, where the story of Melchizedek, which we find in the 14th of Genesis, is used as illustrative of the office of Christ. Philo, in fact, explains Melchizedek as representing the 'Logos,' the 'Word' or 'Reason,' or, as he says, the 'Kingly Mind,' in man. His words are these, (*Allegories*, II., 25, 26):

Moreover, God made Melchizedek, the *king of peace*, that is, of Salem, (for that is the interpretation of this name,) 'His own High Priest,' without having previously mentioned any particular action of his, but merely because He had made him a king, and a lover of peace, and especially worthy of his priesthood. For he is called a *righteous king*, [*Melchizedek* meaning 'king of righteousness,'] and a king is the opposite of a tyrant, because the one is the interpreter of law, and the other of lawlessness. The Tyrannical Mind, then, imposes violent and mischievous commands on both soul and body, and such as have a tendency to cause violent suffering, being commands to act according to vice, and to indulge the passions with enjoyment. But the other, the Kingly Mind, in the first place, does not command, but rather persuades, since it gives recommendations of such a character, that, if guided by them, the soul, like a vessel, will enjoy a fair voyage through life, being directed in its course by a good governor and pilot; and this good pilot is right Reason. We may therefore call the Tyrannical Mind the hostile ruler, and the Kingly Mind, the guide to peace, that is, Salem. And this Kingly Mind will bring forth food full of cheerfulness and joy: for Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine. . . . For the Reason is a priest, having as its inheritance the true God, and entertaining lofty and sublime and magnificent ideas about Him; for he is 'the priest of the Most High God.'

There is evidently a striking resemblance between this

language of Philo and that in which Melchizedek is spoken of in the 7th chapter of the epistle before us :

‘For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation *king of righteousness*, and after that also king of Salem, that is, *king of peace*, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.’

The same kind of argument is used by the two writers, and they employ almost the very same expressions. Both of them notice the meaning of the name Melchizedek, ‘king of righteousness,’ and the title, king of Salem, that is, ‘king of peace.’ The Jew of Alexandria says that—

God made Melchizedek His own High Priest, without having previously mentioned any particular action of his,—that is, he notes the fact that he was not self-made, but was made of God, divinely appointed—without anything being said about his previous history, about his parentage or descent, to show that he had an hereditary priesthood,—

but merely because He had made him a king, and a lover of peace, and especially worthy of his priesthood.

And so the writer of the Hebrews speaks of Melchizedek as not self-appointed,—he ‘glorified not himself to be made High Priest,’—not entering on the priesthood by inheritance,—but as one ‘called of God’ to be a priest, without anything being said about his previous or his later history, his birth or his death, as one—

‘without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.’

Both writers, again, speak of Melchizedek as a ‘High Priest’ (Heb.v.10), though this appellation is not given to him either in the story of Genesis, or in the 110th Psalm, in which reference is made to it, and from which indeed the Scripture writer is quoting. The latter says that Melchizedek in these respects is ‘made like unto the Son of God,’ and ‘abideth a priest continually.’ The former, the Jewish philosopher, compares him to the ‘Kingly Mind, the Reason,’ and he says that this is ‘a priest’—

having, as its inheritance, the True God, and entertaining lofty and sublime and magnificent ideas about Him.

And you will not forget, what I explained so fully in my

sermon for Christmas, that by 'the Reason' Philo means, as I have said, the 'Logos,' the 'Word,' whom he calls the 'Son of God,' the 'First-begotten of God,' the 'Second God,' the 'Image of God,' the 'Fountain of Wisdom,' the 'Intellectual Sun,' the 'Light of the World.' It is obvious, therefore, that there is a close and remarkable resemblance between the two passages, both in the idea and in the expression; and that the writer to the Hebrews, though he cites a verse from the 110th Psalm—

'As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'—

a Psalm quoted also by St Peter, Acts ii.34,35, and by our Lord himself, as referred to the Messiah by the Jews of that time, Matt.xxii.44, Mark xii.36, Luke xx.42,43,—has yet gone far beyond the Psalm in explaining this allusion, and has adopted the language and modes of thought, which prevailed in later days among the Jews of Alexandria, whether originating first among them, or traditionally handed down from an earlier age in the schools of Jewish philosophy.

Let us now proceed to consider more closely the whole contents of the text before us.

'Who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death.'

The reference is made, of course, to our Lord's bitter agony and distress in the garden of Gethsemane. And the first lesson, therefore, which we are taught is that, 'in the days of his flesh,' Jesus, our Saviour, suffered as we must suffer,—nay, suffered not only bodily sufferings, pain and want and weariness, but suffered also mental anguish, and especially from the fear of death. Of him it was true, as it may be of any one of us, that, to use the words of the psalmist of old—

'The fear of death came upon him, and a horrible dread overwhelmed him.'

Are there any of you who shrink from the thought of the dark valley,—who picture to yourselves at times the closing hour of life, as you yourselves may be called to pass through it,—perhaps, upon a downy pillow, with dear friends surrounding, and striving to soothe each pang with tender offices of love,—perhaps, in some rude hut, friend-

less, untended, and alone,—perhaps, by the stroke of some dread pestilence, which in a few short hours shall bear us out of the midst of health and activity, and make us ready for the grave,—

‘Behold, at eventide trouble! and before the morning, he is not!’—perhaps, by some awful catastrophe, like that which has lately carried down a noble ship, with 220 souls, all full of the vigour of life, and, but a few days before, of hope and gladness, into the ocean-depths? Are there any, I say, who have so realized to themselves the thought of these last trying and, it may be, terrible moments, that they have felt the heart turn cold within them, and shrunk away shuddering from the contemplation of death? Then he, who is the great exemplar of humanity, we find, did the same. He, who was pure in heart, and loving, and innocent, when he knew that a violent death was near at hand for him, shrunk with dismay and dread from the thought of it. Such fear, if any should be oppressed by it, is not, then, a sinful fear: it may be deepened by a sense of sin, by the consciousness of a misspent life, but it is not itself connected with sin. It is not a consequence of sin, but of human weakness, as also the unshrinking firmness, which bears others resolutely through the trying hour, may be strengthened indeed by a living faith in God, but may be found without it,—has been found in some, who have died with curses upon their lips, and hatred of God and Man in the heart.

I warn you, therefore, brethren, against ascribing too much importance, as many do, to the circumstances of a death-bed—against drawing judgments favourable or otherwise to the character of the deceased, from what you may have heard or witnessed of his state at the last. Not how a man dies, but how he has lived, is the great question. What are his daily habits—his daily thoughts—his daily actions? There is nothing else by which the great judgment will be given. As one has written, Bp Jeremy Taylor, iii. p. 258:—

It is a great art to die well, and to be learnt by men in health, by them that can discourse and consider, by those whose understanding and acts of reason are not abated with fears or pains. . . . All, that a sick and dying man can do, is but to exercise those virtues which he before acquired, and to perfect that repentance which was begun more early.

It has frequently happened, not only that a nervous dread and apprehension has seized on pious minds in the contemplation beforehand, or in the near approach, of death, but that the vital powers have been so far impaired in the last sad hours that the brain becomes affected; and then may be witnessed at times that saddest, most trying, of all scenes for the friends who stand around, when the reasoning mind has no more control over the powers of thought and speech, and words flow forth from the sufferer's lips, which it distresses them to hear, as it would have shocked him to utter, if still in possession of his faculties. A hasty and uncharitable judgment might pronounce such utterances to be signs of a wicked heart, of a false life, where sinful habits have been secretly indulged, and hidden from the eyes of men by a cloak of hypocritical pretence, which has now been removed, as the last mortal struggle draws near. A superstitious mind would explain these phenomena as promptings and temptations of the devil, as if some evil spirit were revelling at last, during these hours of weakness, in shortlived possession for a time of the faculties of one, whom he could not master in his days of vigour and watchfulness. The thoughtful and charitable Christian will see in them the tokens probably of a fight won, of a victory gained,—the impressions left, in the mysterious records of the brain, of many a struggle maintained in former days with evil,—the signs that our brother has not passed through his appointed career of earthly trial without having been exposed to those temptations which are common to man, nor, as we may lovingly believe, without having resisted and in his measure overcome them. But God only knows.

I repeat, it is not the peace and quiet of the death-bed, or its trouble and confusion, its expressions of sure confidence or its utterances of fear, distrust, and even despair, that can warrant us in forming a confident judgment as to the spiritual state of the dying, or their hope in eternity. God only can do this certainly, who sees the heart, and who knows the life. If, as far as our knowledge goes, the life of our friend has been pure and upright, truthful and loving, we may cherish a blessed hope for him, whatever may have been the circumstances of his dying hours. If we know that he has lived unfaithfully, we must distrust



the appearance of calm serenity, which is often the mere product of the disease itself, that is bringing him down to the grave. But in any case we must leave him in the hands of God, that righteous Judge, that merciful Father, who knows all the circumstances of our lives, all our sins, all our weaknesses, all the grace which has been given us to resist temptation, and the use which we have made of it.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
 Will be the final goal of ill,  
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;—  
 That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
 That not one life will be destroyed,  
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
 When God hath made the pile complete ;—  
 That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
 That not a moth with vain desire  
 Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,  
 Or but subserves another's gain.  
 Behold, we know not anything ;  
 I can but trust that good shall fall  
 At last—far off—at last, to all,  
 And every winter change to spring.  
 So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
 An infant, crying in the night,—  
 An infant crying for the light,  
 And with no language but a cry.

(ii) And that cry of his poor fearful children will assuredly reach our Father's ears. He, too, the Son of Man—  
 'in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, *was heard in that he feared* ;'—  
 that is, he was heard, because he feared his Heavenly Father, not with a slavish dread, but with the reverential feelings of a child, submitting himself to His Infinite Wisdom, confiding in His Faithfulness and Love, surrendering himself to His disposal :

'Father, if it be possible, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done.'

The example then of our Lord teaches us to take refuge from the fear of death—from all our fears—in the Mercy and Love of God. The little child that, crying in its terror, brings its mother to its side, will bury at once its head in her bosom, hardly knowing the cause of its fear, or how

her presence will be a protection from it, yet feeling safe in her embrace. So too will our Great Father hear our cry, and will be present when we call to Him, and we may throw ourselves upon His Breast with all our weight of fear and woe, and be sure that He tenderly cares for us, and feel the Everlasting Arms around us.

‘Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.’

‘Them that fear Him,’ says the Psalmist: ‘he was heard, in that he feared.’ The Lord is present when we do *not* cry to Him; He is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of great goodness, even to those who do not fear Him with the reverential fear of children. But the comfort of knowing that He is Present—of feeling that we are heard and answered—can only be for those who live habitually in the fear of God,—who ‘set the Lord always before them,’ and are able therefore to say, ‘Because He is at my right-hand, I shall not be moved,’—who ‘come to the light daily, that their deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.’ In one word, it will be realized by those who, like our Lord himself, habitually practise the duty and privilege of prayer,—not merely in their times of grief and weakness, of doubt and dread, of trial and perplexity,—but in the season of health and strength, when God’s work is to be done in the world, and men’s principles are to be tested and proved amidst the active duties of life. I do not mean that such men will always be using actual words of prayer, or that they will expect to be ‘heard for their much speaking.’ There will indeed be times when in private and public they will pray with the lips, as well as with the heart, as their Master did, and will pray in the spirit of his prayer, addressing themselves to Him who is ‘Our Father in Heaven.’ But those, of whom I speak, will not need to utter words of prayer, in order to be praying still,—to be communing with God,—to be looking up to Him for strength and guidance in every difficulty, for grace to do faithfully His Will in their daily duties. The spirit of their lives will be expressed by those words of the Psalmist:—

‘Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.’

(iii) But the text goes on to say—

‘Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.’

Here, too, our Lord’s example teaches us. He had prayed for deliverance, ‘if possible,’ from a bloody and violent death,—for the removal, ‘if His Father willed it,’ of a bitter cup, which already in his foreboding mind he saw held out for him. He did not ask that the course of nature might be changed for him, but that, if it might be, the hearts of men might be so influenced, or their doings so overruled, that this cup might pass from him. He did not think it wrong, then, to pray for deliverance from such distresses, provided only that the prayer be made with that proviso,—‘Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’ But ‘though a son,’—though a dutiful and loving child, whose cry was heard, ‘in that he feared,’—he had to ‘learn obedience by the things which he suffered.’ Like any one of his brethren, he had to learn, even to the end, new lessons in the spirit of obedience,—to drink the cup which his Father’s Hand had mixed,—‘to be made perfect through sufferings.’

True life is made up of action and suffering: and this latter is not a mere *acquiescence* in what is inevitable, but an *acceptance* of pain, of apparent failure, of disappointment, from the hands of an overruling Power, in whose Wisdom and Goodness we entirely believe and confide. To an active spirit, inspired with great and high aims, mere physical and mental toil and suffering is light compared with disappointment. We have no reason to suppose that our Lord, except in his last great agony, was called to endure much physical pain or even mental labour. But the writer of this epistle speaks of it as an especial part of his suffering, that he ‘endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.’ It was the suffering of one, in whom ‘the Father’ by the Divine Word ‘was dwelling,’—whose whole heart and soul was filled with a longing, a passionate, desire to glorify God and advance the welfare and happiness of man, yet who met with constant enmity and contradiction. The opposition of his countrymen, their utter misunderstanding of his pure and spiritual teaching, the personal hostility and hatred of their leaders, the dullness and faithlessness of his disciples, must have been hard to bear; and all this was borne by him, as his prayer in the garden shows, not as one who sees the end from the begin-

ning, but as one who leaves his cause in the hands of the All-Wise, Almighty, and All-Good.

*'He learned obedience by the things which he suffered.'*

It seems as if obedience, the subjection of the lower nature in us to the higher, of the natural will to the Holy Will, requires the discipline of suffering,—especially in us, who are weakened by many falls, and covered by many stains of sin. How can we expect to walk on flowers all the way to heaven,—to find ourselves on the summit of the celestial hill without the weariness and pain of upward striving,—to reap a harvest of glory without having had the plough-share driven first, and again and again, through our earthly hearts? The wealth and honours of this world are not won by merely wishing for them, by sitting down with folded hands to wait for them. The knowledge of man and nature is not gained by intuition, or by idly glancing over an amusing page. If labour, then, and patient toil are needed for obtaining these less and lower goods, shall we think that no sacrifice is needful, no study, no patience, no pain, that we may win that joy and glory for which we were made, and which all the discipline of our life on earth was expressly intended and contrived to procure for us?

For innocence, remember,—such as that which the popular notion ascribes to our first parents before the Fall,—innocence is not virtue; it is rather a negative, than a positive, condition of the soul. Temptation must intervene: the soul must be called to choose between the evil and the good, and to persevere in its choice, notwithstanding the solicitations of the lower nature. In the lower creatures there is no such struggle. The voice of the mere animal nature, the instincts which lead to the preservation of the individual and of the race, are the highest—the only—guides of the brute creature. But man is made up of that which is natural, and that which is spiritual or supernatural,—supernatural, that is, in respect of his animal nature, but in strict accordance still with his higher moral and spiritual nature. For him the law is—

*'Whosoever shall seek to save his life—by departing from the law of truth and righteousness—shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life—in the service of God and his fellow-men—shall preserve it, unto Life eternal.'*

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which reveals to us the

Supreme Being, not only as a Faithful Creator, but as a Tender Father, as a Holy Loving Will which reigns in the Universe, calls out also in man, as His child, that love, which is ready to lay down everything personal, even life itself, in the cause of God, which is no other than the cause of humanity, the cause of Truth, and Justice, and Mercy. On the dark back-ground of suffering, that Loving Will stands out in double brightness for all creatures to read. But, as I have often said, not God Himself can *give* us virtue. 'Tribulation worketh patience': we must 'add to our faith virtue': we must 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,'—we must do this, says the Apostle,—'because it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure,' with the help, therefore, of His Spirit, in the faith of His constant Presence with us, and after the example of the Son of Man, who—  
 'learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and, being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.'

(iv) This is the same thought, which the same writer has expressed elsewhere when he says—

'It became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

Thus Jesus is regarded as the chief of many brethren,—the leader of that mighty band of faith, who overcome the world. And, as their captain, he goes, as it were, before them, gives the word of command, and shows them by his example how to conquer even in dying. The recorded words of Jesus, his pure utterances breathing ever love to God and love to man, are watchwords to his true followers, in the hour of battle, in the hour of darkness and distress,—talismans, as it were, to be kept in the memory against the time of trial and temptation. Holy words are the very voice of God, whoever utters them. The whispers of our own conscience are imperative upon us. We are as much bound to obey them—yea, more, than if an articulate voice were to come to us from the glory of the noonday or the blackness of the midnight. But when the same commands,—commands which are echoed by the voice within us, which are felt by us to be holy, just, and good,—are uttered articulately by a fellow-man, they come to us with an out-

wardness, which helps us at least to recognize their power, their reality, as a message from God to the soul: still more when they come from the lips of him, that holy, loving one, who has suffered on our behalf, that he might bring us to God,—who has opened to us the way to our Father's Presence, and sealed the message which he brought to us, and all the gracious work of his life, by a bloody death, being thus 'made perfect through sufferings.' How many stubborn wills have been subdued by the words of Jesus! how many hard hearts melted! How many, weary with the world and sick of themselves, have found peace and rest to their souls by learning of him, and taking upon them the light and easy yoke, which his Divine teaching lays upon us, of a childlike trust in the Living God, a childlike fear, and a brotherly love to one another! And, after Christ's example, each follower of Christ in his measure, as God inspires him, may work towards the same great end, the salvation, the moral perfection, of those around him. He may still persuade others, by word and by example, to be 'followers of God, as dear children,'—not using the voice of authority and command, but that of earnest entreaty, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ'—who, according to the text, 'was called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek.'

(v) I have already explained in what sense these words may be understood of Christ, who 'through the Eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God,' in a pure and faithful life, and in patient obedience even unto death, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable. But let us remember that in this too he was our example: in this respect also must this mind be in us, which was also in Christ. We, too, are, as St Peter says, 'a royal priesthood,'—or, as he says more fully elsewhere, we are—

'a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'

We also are meant to be offering, each in our measure, a portion of that great sacrifice from all Humanity, redeemed from death by the Indwelling Word, with which the Father will be well-pleased. And so St Paul speaks of 'filling up in his flesh that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ'—and the writer to the Hebrews says—

‘By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually’—

by obedient lives, and patient suffering, if need be, for the Truth’s sake, even unto death.

In the priesthood of Christ, then, and of all mankind after his example, we see the abolition of any priestly caste, whether hereditary or of man’s appointment. The priest or presbyter in our Reformed Church is the servant of the congregation, not nearer to God than any of them,—not nearer, that is, in virtue of his office. The truest, the holiest, the most loving, is nearest to God, and *as such*, whether ordinary layman or presbyter, he is a priest to his brethren to help to bring them near. But no ordination will help to make men holy, true-hearted, or loving. The idea that ordained men are made more ‘holy’ than others, by virtue of their ordination,—independently of their being made thereby more pure and more loving,—will tend very much to make them *unholy*,—to puff *them* up with pride, to stupefy *others* with superstition. That any, in fact, should claim to exercise power over the consciences of their fellow-men—should ‘lord it over their faith’—by virtue of their priestly authority, is an invasion of their Christian liberty. In the words of a great Christian writer, now with God, (Dr Arnold, *The Church*, p.15,) from whom I quoted last Sunday,—

The essential point in the notion of a priest is this, that he is a person made necessary to our intercourse with God, without being necessary or beneficial to us morally. His influence makes the worshipper neither a wiser man nor a holier than he would have been without it; and yet it is held to be indispensable. This unreasonable, unmoral, unspiritual necessity is the essence of the idea of priesthood.

And he adds, p.19—

This dogma of a human priesthood in Christ’s Church, appointed to administer his sacraments, and thereby to mediate between God and Man, from no reasonable or moral necessity, . . . is a mere error, and an error not merely speculative, but fraught with all manner of mischief, idolatrous and demoralizing, destructive of Christ’s Church, injurious to Christ and his Spirit, the worst and earliest form of Anti-christ.

Let us remember, then, that we are each of us called of God, to be, like our Lord himself, ‘priests after the order of Melchizedek,’ ‘kings and priests unto God,’—that we have no need of any human priest or mediator to stand between our souls and God,—that we may daily approach

Him, in the words which Christ himself has taught us, as 'Our Father which is in Heaven.' Let the sense of our high-calling more and more thoroughly penetrate our minds and possess us; and while it fills our hearts with thankfulness and adoration, let us seek to offer daily the 'sacrifice of praise,' the fruit of our lives, as well as of our lips, 'giving thanks to His Name.' In the words of the Apostle,—

'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'



## IX.

### THE MAN OF SORROW.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 1866.

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'Who hath believed our report?  
And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?  
For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant,  
And as a root out of a dry ground;  
He hath no form nor comeliness,  
And, when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should  
desire him.  
He is despised and rejected of men,  
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
And we hid, as it were, our faces from him;  
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.'—Isa. liii. 1—3.

THIS chapter, which has been selected by our Church as one of the Lessons for Good Friday, may be justly called a psalm of the Messiah—the Messiah of the Jews first, but to us the Messiah of the whole earth. Their thoughts for many generations were fixed on the hope of a *deliverer*; they needed a *national* deliverer: but all men need a personal deliverer. They, as a nation, were enslaved and oppressed: but all men are held in thralldom more or less; each man is conscious of being more or less enslaved and oppressed. The lower powers in man are always striving to bring the higher nature, the child of God, into subjection: the flesh ever lusteth against the spirit. As St Paul once exclaimed—

'I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

Yes—we all feel our need, as he did, of such a deliverer. A national deliverer, such as the Jews looked for, by the might of this world, by prudent counsels, by force of arms,

may free his people from force and cruelty. But how can a personal deliverer bring help to those oppressed with the burden of sin, loaded with the chains of evil habits? How can such a Saviour as this make common cause with the enslaved—the failing—will, and help it up from under the feet of sinful passions, which are treading it down? Only by sympathy, only by long-suffering love, can he do this. And this chapter, in a gush of inspired poetry, with deep, prophetic insight, gives a description of the true Messiah, the true servant of God, the true deliverer of men,—a description which has been fulfilled in a measure in every one who has been such in any age under any circumstances, and eminently therefore in the Son of Man himself, in him whom we acknowledge as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Before, however, we proceed to draw from this passage the special lessons which it contains for us at this time, let me first point out the circumstances under which it was written, and to which, no doubt, it must be more immediately referred. We have been so long accustomed to hear the language of this chapter applied directly and exclusively to the sufferings of Christ, that we have almost lost sight altogether of its real original meaning, as we gather it from the context in which it stands. Such words as those in the text—

‘He is despised and rejected of men,  
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief’—

or those others which follow shortly after—

‘He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement of our peace was upon him,  
And with his stripes we are healed. . . .  
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
Yet he opened not his mouth;  
He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter,  
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,  
So he openeth not his mouth’—

are so very applicable to the circumstances of the death of Jesus, that it is no wonder that by pious souls in all ages they have been regarded as distinct predictions of that event,—more especially as some of these expressions are actually applied to it by some of the New Testament writers. And, doubtless, they *are* predictions of that

event, though not in the way commonly supposed. As Christ is the great exemplar of all the Saviours of mankind, that have ever suffered in any age on behalf of their brethren, 'filling up that which was left behind of his afflictions,'—as he too, 'the captain of our salvation,' was 'made perfect by sufferings,' and, 'though a son, had to learn obedience by the things which he suffered,' before he could become 'the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him,'—the language of this chapter, generally, and of the context before and after, of which it only forms a part, may be applied pre-eminently to him, as it may be applied also in our measure to any one of us his brethren, who must be willing to suffer as he suffered, that we may rejoice as he rejoiced—to share his cross, that we may share his crown. But yet this chapter, and the whole section to which it belongs, was not written originally with any direct reference to Christ, or to any individual person at all, as you will very soon perceive, when I make a few quotations from it. You will see that the expressions of the prophet are, as I have said, *generally*, and for the most part, applicable to the case of him, whom we call pre-eminently the 'Man of Sorrows.' But they are not *all* suitable to him, nor can they *all* be referred to any single individual.

I have mentioned already that the last twenty-seven chapters of the book of Isaiah are not the work of the older prophet, who lived in the time of Hezekiah, to whom the greater part—though by no means the whole—of the rest of the book is due. They are the composition of a very much later writer, of one who lived in the time of the Babylonish Captivity; and, either from the fact of this later prophet's name being also Isaiah, or perhaps from some supposed resemblance in the style to the older prophecies, they have been incorrectly annexed to the writings of the older Isaiah, by the unknown Jewish editors, who collected the present Old Testament Scriptures, and authorized them as 'canonical.' I quoted on a former occasion some expressions from these chapters, which showed plainly that they were written during the time of the Captivity: and, as it is of importance to the understanding of the true meaning of the text before us, that you should have this point thoroughly settled in your minds, I will re-

peat one or two of these passages again with some additions. Thus we read—

‘Awake, awake! stand up, O Jerusalem,  
Which hast drunk at Jehovah’s hand the cup of his fury;  
Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling,  
Thou hast wrung them out . . .  
These two things are come unto thee,—  
Who shall be sorry for thee?  
Desolation and destruction, the famine and the sword.—  
By whom shall I comfort thee?  
Thy sons have fainted,  
They lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net;  
They are full of the fury of Jehovah,  
The rebuke of thy God.’ li.17—20.

And then the prophet cries :—

‘O Lord, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways,  
And hardened our heart from Thy fear?  
Return for Thy servant’s sake,  
The tribes of Thine inheritance,  
The people of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while;  
Our adversaries have trodden down Thy Sanctuary.’ lxviii.17,18.  
‘Thy holy cities are a wilderness;  
Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.  
Our holy and our beautiful House,  
Where our fathers praised Thee,  
Is burned up with fire,  
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.’ lxiv.10,11.

These passages sufficiently indicate the state of things when the prophet was writing: Zion was a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, their beautiful Temple lay a heap of blackened ruins. It is plain, therefore, that he was writing during the Babylonish Captivity; and it would seem that he wrote *towards the end of it*, for he speaks in several passages of Babylon itself as about to be immediately visited with severe retribution, for its unmerciful treatment of the captives of Judah.

‘Come down, and sit in the dust,  
O virgin-daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground;  
There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans;  
For thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.  
Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans;  
For thou shalt no more be called,  
The Lady of Kingdoms.  
I was wroth with my people,  
I polluted mine inheritance,  
And gave them into thine hand;  
Thou didst shew them no mercy;

Upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke,  
Therefore shall evil come upon thee,' &c. xlvii.1—11.

Then he points to Cyrus, the Persian king, as the 'Shepherd of Jehovah,' xlv.28, nay, the 'Anointed of Jehovah,' xlv.1, in other words, as the Messiah, the Christ of that age, who should be raised up to be the Conqueror of Babylon and the restorer of Israel.

'Thus saith Jehovah to His Anointed, to Cyrus,  
Whose right hand I have holden,  
To subdue nations before him, . . .  
I have even called thee by name,  
I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.' xlv.1—4.

While such words were supposed to have been written by the older Isaiah, who lived nearly two hundred years before the time of Cyrus, it was of course regarded as miraculous, that even his name should have been announced so long before he was born. Now, however, we see plainly under what circumstances the passage was written,—when Cyrus was not only in existence, but was probably in full march against Babylon, after a series of splendid conquests, which marked him out in the eyes of all observers—more especially in those of the longing captives of Israel—as the Saviour, on whom under God all their hopes of deliverance from the yoke of the Chaldeans—his enemies as well as theirs—was centred.\*

Then in many striking passages the prophet announces that deliverance is nigh at hand. He begins with these words :

'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people !  
Saith your God :  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,  
For she hath received from Jehovah's hand double for all her sins !' xl.1,2.

And again and again he returns to this cheering strain :—

'Break forth into joy, sing together,  
Ye waste places of Jerusalem !  
For Jehovah hath comforted His people,  
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.' lli.1,2,9.

And so we come to the words immediately before the text, which are as follows :—

'Behold ! my servant shall deal prudently ;  
He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high ;

\* See some of the chief points of the evidence for the later origin of these chapters summed up in Dean Stanley's *Jewish Church*, *Second Series*, p.583—5.

As many are astonished at thee,  
 His visage was so marred more than any man,  
 And his form more than the sons of men,—  
 So shall he sprinkle many nations;  
 The kings shall shut their mouths at him;  
 For that which had not been told them shall they see,  
 And that which they had not heard shall they consider.' lli.13,15.

The question now is, Who is this 'servant of Jehovah,' whose face had been 'marred more than any man,' so that many were astonished at his misery, yet who should be 'exalted and extolled,' should 'sprinkle'—that is, cleanse and purify—'many nations' and be the object of reverence to 'kings,' so that they should 'shut their mouths' in respectful silence before him? Such expressions as these may, no doubt, be applied—in some respects, forcibly—in others, not inappropriately—to Christ, to his suffering and exaltation. But there are others, which cannot be so applied. How, for instance, can such language as this be used of Christ?—

'Who is blind, but my servant?  
 Or deaf, as my messenger, that I sent?  
 Who is blind, as he that is perfect,  
 And blind, as Jehovah's servant?  
 Seeing many things, but thou observest not;  
 Opening the ears, but he heareth not.'

In short, it will be seen by a comparison of the other passages in which the 'servant of Jehovah' is spoken of, that the prophet is *not* speaking of Christ, but of God's 'servant Jacob,' His 'chosen people' Israel.

'Thou Israel, art *my servant*,  
 Jacob, whom I have chosen,  
 The seed of Abraham my friend;  
 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,  
 And called thee from the chief men thereof,  
 And said unto thee, Thou art *my servant*. xli.8,9.  
 Yet now hear, O Jacob, *my servant*,  
 And Israel whom I have chosen;  
 Thus saith Jehovah, that made thee,  
 And formed thee from the womb, that will help thee,  
 Fear not, O Jacob, *my servant*,  
 And thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. xliv.1.  
 Remember then, O Jacob and Israel,  
 For thou art *my servant*;  
 I have formed thee,  
 Thou art *my servant*. xliv.21.

It is very plain that the 'servant of Jehovah,' of whom the prophet is speaking throughout these passages, is Jacob

or Israel. To him Jehovah's name had been especially revealed; he had been specially 'chosen,' 'taken from the ends of the earth,' and 'called from the chief men thereof,' that he might be the minister of truth and righteousness, the messenger of God's grace, to all nations. But Israel had been unfaithful to his high calling, and must be chastened, and brought low for his transgressions:—

'Therefore He hath poured upon him the fury of His anger,  
And the strength of battle;  
And it hath set him on fire round about,—  
Yet he knew not;  
And it burned him,—  
Yet he laid it not to heart.' xlii.24,25.

Thus it was that 'his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.' And yet was he 'Jehovah's servant' still—'called' of God to a high and glorious destiny, 'chosen' and 'beloved.' And he shall still fulfil that destiny. Though many were now 'astonied at him,' yet shall 'he be exalted and extolled, and be very high,' he shall yet 'sprinkle many nations,' he shall bring them to the knowledge of God's truth, and cleanse them, as with the washing of water by the word:—

'Behold *my servant*, whom I uphold,  
Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!  
I have put my spirit upon him,  
He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . .  
I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness,  
And will hold thine hand and will keep thee,  
And give thee for a covenant of the people,  
For a light to the Gentiles,  
To open the blind eyes,  
To bring out the prisoners from the prison,  
And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.'

xlii.1-4,6,7, comp.xlix.8.

In this way the prophet goes on, mixing up descriptions of the present wretched condition of Israel with promises of a glorious restoration, surpassing all belief. And so he comes to the words of the text:—

'Who hath believed our report?  
And to whom hath Jehovah's Arm been revealed?'

Who would believe that such a wondrous change could pass over the afflicted, down-trodden, 'servant of Jehovah,'—who was now, to look upon, but as a 'tender plant,' a weakly shoot out of a dry soil, 'having no form nor comeliness,'—'no beauty' that any should desire him—who

was 'despised and rejected of all men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'? And why did Israel thus suffer? The prophet explains—

'Surely, he hath borne our griefs,  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we did esteem him stricken,  
Smitten of God and afflicted.'

It seemed as if Israel had been utterly cast off and abandoned—as if the grievous woes, under which 'Jehovah's servant' had been brought low, were signs that he was rejected and abhorred, of God as well as man, as one stricken with some disfiguring leprosy or deadly plague.

'But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement of our peace was upon him,  
And with his stripes we are healed.  
All we, like sheep, went astray;  
We turned everyone to his own way;  
And Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

We have the same idea here, and the same expressions, as in l.1, where the figure, however, is changed, and Israel is no longer spoken of as a *servant*, who is chastised and smitten with stripes for the sins of his subordinates, but as a *wife*, who is divorced for the sins of her children; and so the prophet says, '*for your transgressions* is your mother put away.'

But no! 'God hath not cast away altogether His people whom He foreknew,'—whom He had 'formed for Himself,' and designed for a glorious office, a grand work in the world, to be the messengers of grace and truth, the leaders in the religious life to their fellow-men.

'Why sayest thou, O Jacob,  
And speakest thou, O Israel,  
My way is hid from Jehovah,  
And my judgment is passed over from my God? xl.27.  
Fear not, thou worm, Jacob,  
And ye men of Israel;  
I will help thee, saith Jehovah,  
And thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. xli.14.  
I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions,  
And as a cloud thy sins. xliv.22.  
In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment;  
But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,  
Saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer.' liv.8.

Israel—the 'Anointed One,' the 'called,' the 'chosen,'—was not plague-stricken, was not abhorred of God, how-



ever 'despised and rejected of men.' The 'servant of Jehovah' was smitten for the sins of the people—was 'wounded for their transgressions,'—was 'bruised for their iniquities.' And he bowed his head meekly and uncomplainingly to receive the stroke of Divine chastisement:—

'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted;  
Yet he opened not his mouth.  
He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,  
And, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,  
So he opened not his mouth.'

It is the same idea as is expressed just before, to express the meek submission of Jerusalem to the afflictions which had been brought upon her, when she had 'drunk at Jehovah's Hand the cup of His Fury,' li.17—

'And thou hast laid thy body as the ground,  
And as the street, to them that went over.' li.23.

It would take me too long on the present occasion to go through the remaining verses of this chapter, and explain the allusions which they contain to the suffering state of Israel and to his future restoration,—more especially as the meaning of some of the Hebrew expressions in these verses is very much disputed by commentators. Thus v.9, where we read in the English version—

'And he made his grave with the wicked,  
And with the rich in his death'—

appears in the Greek translation of the Septuagint, made nearly three centuries before the coming of Christ, and therefore certainly not falsified for the purpose of opposing Christian doctrines—

'And I will give the wicked for his burial,  
And the rich for his death.'

But, if any one will read carefully and *consecutively* these last twenty-seven chapters of the book of Isaiah, he will see at once for himself the truth of the fact I have stated,—namely, that throughout the whole section the 'servant of Jehovah,' whose present degradation and future exaltation are described by the prophet, is Israel itself, God's chosen people, for the present apparently 'cast away,' 'blinded,' 'broken off,' because of 'unbelief,' yet still 'beloved for the fathers' sake,'—for 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'

In later days, however, as I have said, this prophetic

description, which so strikingly personifies the 'servant of Jehovah,' came to be applied almost exclusively to the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, to 'the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.' And, doubtless, to a great extent—though, as we have seen, not in every particular,—it is applicable to the case of the Lord Jesus, and in their measure to all the 'servants of Jehovah' in every age, who have trod in the steps of Jesus, have been under God the helpers and saviours of their brethren,—have 'borne their griefs and carried their sorrows,'—have sympathized with the miseries, and shared the burden, of the ignorance and sin of their age. Let us briefly consider the chief points which the chapter before us suggests for our consideration, in reference to this subject.

(i) It sets before us the chief characteristics to the eye of sense in the life of Christ—namely, humiliation and suffering.

The trappings of this world's state express *separation* from the poor, the fallen, the weak. They hold out the owner to the admiration of their fellow-men. They do not promise his sympathy with them,—still less that he should devote himself to toil and suffering for their sakes. The 'servant of Jehovah'—the Messenger—the Mediator—is here described as 'despised' and 'rejected,' without outward beauty, form, or comeliness. He took on him the form of a servant: he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to endure not humiliation only, but suffering, to be 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.'

There are some who seem to think that wealth, if it were but inexhaustible, would suffice to dissipate all human evils. Such as these cry aloud, 'Woe to the rich!' and lay all the sufferings and miseries of mankind at the door of those, who engross to their own use too large a portion of this world's goods. But 'man doth not live by bread alone.' The *Saviour* must do more than multiply the loaves and fishes; else even those, who have been fed by his bounty, will not be long among his disciples. The Saviour's heart must be wrung; he must have tears for those who know not the things which belong to their peace; his spirit must yearn over the wanderers, over the lost. The only unanswerable proof of love is suffering. This will convince and melt the most obdurate—melt in

order to recast, to renew. Who is there so hardened, as not to feel bound in soul to one who has suffered for him? But in all times the crown of the deliverer has been a crown of thorns. Of the mass of mankind it has always been too true, that 'all like sheep have gone astray,' following blindly evil customs, fleshly appetites, and falling short of their high destiny, of their true rest, as children of the Most High. Therefore the lot of those, who were not only seeking after God for themselves, but striving to lead others back to Him, has ever been more or less painful. They have always had to oppose and thwart their fellows, and consequently to be opposed and thwarted by them—by those who care not to touch with their own finger the burden of the sin and ignorance of their brethren, which they, as Christ's followers, are striving to bear. They must often stand alone—be suspected, censured, reviled—in some ages of the world, be persecuted, like their Master, even unto death. The sons of God in every age have had a taste at least of that cup, which Jesus drained in the garden and on the cross. We cannot truly understand the death, which we commemorate on Good Friday, if we forget the noble army of martyrs and confessors, who have followed in the train of him, who was 'in all things made like unto his brethren.'

(ii) But, secondly, this was the Will of God concerning him. 'He grows up before him'—he is in Jehovah's eyes, with Jehovah's cognizance, permission, consent—as a tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground.' Or, as afterwards it is more distinctly stated—

'Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all'—

'It pleased Jehovah to bruise him: He hath put him to grief.'

This is a deep, mysterious subject. Are the sufferings of a son acceptable to a father? Yet it was the Father's Will that Jesus should drink this bitter cup, that he should be 'made perfect through suffering,' that he should 'learn obedience by the things which he suffered,'—and that all His saints—His chosen messengers—His 'servants'—in every age, should be baptized in suffering,—that the most godlike among men should feel most 'the burden and the misery of all this heavy and this weary world.'

We cannot think of God as suffering. Suffering is passion, it seems to imply some action in another, some

alien power inflicting, which we cannot connect with the idea of the Supreme, the self-existent, absolute Being, from whom all proceeds. Yet our whole souls refuse to recognize that mere *Power* is Supreme: we place *Love* on the throne of the Universe. Do we not feel that Love—Love, long-enduring, suffering, dying, yet still unchanged through every pang—is more adorable than any Majesty or Might, than any irresistible, inexorable Omnipotence? Does not the notion of the latter naked attribute—mere Power—being the centre of the Universe make that centre appear to us a fearful dark spot, instead of a light and life-giving one? There are thoughts and questionings such as these, which flit, as it were, before our mind's eyes at times, like specks and shadows, when we look straight up into the heaven of heavens. We cannot *understand* our God, the God of Love, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Father. But we accept with our whole hearts that revelation which He has given us of Himself—not in the Bible only, and in the life and death of Jesus, but in our own hearts also, when *we* feel the burden of the sins of those we love—as being grieved and wearied with the sins of His people, as crucified in His Son, as suffering with His Saints.

In some mysterious way the sufferings of the good in all ages are the offering—'well-pleasing, acceptable unto God'—for the sins of the whole human family. The sacrifice of Christ is the great type and exemplar of that which in our measure each one of us must offer, if we would be his true followers, who 'died upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility,'—if we would 'follow the example of his patience,' that we may 'be made partakers of his resurrection.' Nay, more, in each individual man the Divine is suffering even now; 'the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;' the Living Word, that dwells within us, is even now too often grieved with our unfaithfulness, and 'crucified afresh' by our sins. And the 'sons of God' in every age are called to 'run with patience the race which is set before them, looking unto Jesus,'—'considering him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest they be wearied and faint in their minds.' This truth, that Christ suffered *on behalf* of his

brethren, has been corrupted by many into the notion of his having offered what is called a vicarious sacrifice, having suffered *instead* of them,—as if God required that some one should be punished in order that His children might be forgiven! And the kindred truth, that we must all suffer—we the members of the body of Christ, as well as our head—*on behalf* of others, has been perverted in the Church of Rome into the practice of selling and buying the merits of the saints,—as if any human being can have merits in such a sense! Yet ‘are we all of one—both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified,’—both Christ, and those whom he calls his ‘brethren,’ the whole family of man; we have all one Father; we are all one Family of God. Do Thou, O Father, renew us daily after Thy Will! Let the Mind that was in Christ be formed in us! Let the reflection of that Divine Exemplar—Thine image, which abides in us,—forbid our being ever cast out of Thy sight!

(iii) But this chapter sets before us also the future glory of Christ, as ‘Jehovah’s servant,’ in the salvation of others:—

‘When Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,  
He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,  
And the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hands.  
He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;  
By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;  
For he shall bear their iniquities.’

It is written that our Lord once said, ‘I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ In the midst of rejection, reviling, persecution,—of the dulness of the masses of men, of the bitter hatred of their leaders,—he felt that his death would only be the casting into the ground of the precious seed of his Divine doctrine, that it would live in innumerable hearts, that the sheep would know the voice of the true Shepherd, the children’s hearts would answer to the call of their Father by him. O yes! ‘the gifts and callings of God are without repentance!’ The work of God may be slow, but it will be sure. We wish to ‘make haste’ in remedying the evils of the world, in enlightening its ignorance, in casting out its sin. But this is not the process which the Wisdom of our Father—ay, and His Love—sees best to take. That very ignorance and sin, which

He suffers to exist, are meant to be the means of exercising and purifying our souls, of strengthening within us Divine affections; of making us more truly conformed to our Father's image. And to the same Love and Wisdom we must commend, while we work for them, the cause of our fellow-men, however steeped they may be in sin and misery. True Love, as St Paul tells us, 'believeth,' 'hopeth,' all things: it is only the weakness of our love which makes us so ready to despair—to despair of any. How great is the patience and long-suffering of God! Let each of us answer for himself. How many years long has the Great Husbandman been looking for fruit on some trees in His Vineyard, has been looking in vain, and yet has not cut them down! He bears with us, He bears with the world; and the very fact, that He so bears with us, is a proof that He has not cast away his children,—that while there is still a seed of life remaining in any one of them, a precious 'remnant' left, which still clings to righteousness, 'seven thousand,' seven hundred, seventy, or seven, or even one single thought or movement of the heart, which 'has not bowed the knee to Baal,'—and where is the man in possession of his reasoning faculties, of whom this is not true?—while there is yet one spark of spiritual life, manifesting itself in the heart and actions of that child, though it be the poor harlot in the street, or the felon in his cell,—there is a sign that the Father of Spirits has not yet forsaken the creature he has made and designed for Himself,—that he has left some work for His chosen ones—His called—His anointed—to do for him in the world,—that they may 'see of the travail of their souls and be satisfied,'—that 'Jehovah's servants,' though 'bruised,' and 'put to grief,' and made, in the daily suffering of their lives, 'an offering for sin,' may yet 'see' a spiritual 'seed,' may 'prolong their days,' being dead yet speaking in the hearts and lives of those who follow them, and so 'the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in their hands.'

## X.

### THE NAME HIGHLY EXALTED.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON EASTER-DAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1866.

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PHIL. II. 9—11.

‘WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH, AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.’

WE are assembled this day, according to the custom of the Church, to celebrate the festival of Easter, the day which is set apart for the special consideration of the subject of our Lord's Resurrection. Last Sunday, and during the whole of Passion Week, now past, the passages of Scripture, selected for the Epistles and Gospels of the day, have been chosen so as to bring out in full view the humiliation of Christ, his ‘obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.’ Now the tone of the Service is changed. Songs of cheerful joy and triumph rise on every side from the lips and hearts of innumerable worshippers; and the lessons of the Church, which ‘testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ,’ now tell us of ‘the glory that should follow.’ May God enable us to have our share in the gladness of this great festival, and go from this place to-day quickened with the desire to tread more closely in the steps of him, who by his patient faith ‘has overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life,’—to ‘follow the example of his patience,’ that we ‘may also be partakers of his resurrection,’—to ‘die with Christ,’ that we may ‘also live with him,’ that ‘like as Christ was raised

up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also may walk in newness of life.'

The name 'Easter' is believed to be derived from that of an ancient Saxon goddess, whose feast was held about the spring-time of the year, and, consequently, near enough to the time of the Christian festival, to allow of the latter being substituted for it, according to the practice of ancient times, to which I have before referred, of replacing the wild excesses and idolatrous feasts of the heathen by the soberer enjoyments of Christian festivity. Thus, as one writes (Miller, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, p.63)—

April the Saxons named Easter-month after their goddess *Eostre*. Thus we still retain a name, which, though commemorating the worship of an ancient idol, has now become endeared to us by the Resurrection of Christ,—a holy time which we can never forget, for at every return it seems to bring back a spirit of beauty into the world, whose pathway is strown with the sweetest and earliest flowers of spring.

But here, again, we have a similar phenomenon to that which we noticed before with reference to the feast of Christmas. In this southern clime, *our* Easter does not fall in spring-time. We cannot point to the gladness of reviving Nature,—to the fresh delights of the vernal season,—to the white blossoms that cover the thorn, to the budding flowers and the new-springing grass, or to 'the woods so full of song,'—as symbols of the event which we celebrate, as helping to pour new life into our hearts, to brighten what the English poet calls—

the vernal light of Easter Morn.

We cannot here point, as he does, to the snow-drop,—

Thou first-born of the year's delight,  
Pride of the dewy glade,  
In vernal green and virgin white,  
Thy vestal robes arrayed!—

and remind you that, when we see such flowers as these, rising again in all their beauty after the passage of the winter-season, with its cold shade, as it were, of death—

They tell us, all will glisten soon  
As green and bright as they.

We cannot here spur on the drooping heart to Easter joy by such an argument drawn from them, as this which he employs in England—



Is there a heart that loves the Spring,  
 Their witness can refuse ?  
 Yet mortals doubt, when angels bring  
 From heaven their Easter news.

Our Easter falls in autumn, when the crops are ripe, and the harvest is begun, and leaves have begun to fall, and the winter—with its bright, clear sky, but with its cold and drought—will soon be here. As before, then, we must dismiss all thought of appealing to the adventitious circumstances, which make the great Christian festivals seasons of special gladness in northern climes, and mix up, doubtless, with the devotional feelings, which properly belong to these occasions, a great deal of mere natural excitement and seasonable exhilaration of spirit. We must fall back here upon the true Easter joy,—that which belongs to it merely as a religious festival,—and seek to derive from the consideration of the subject, which is specially brought before us this day, some food for the soul, some thoughts which may help us to go forward, with a brighter hope and a firmer constancy, to our own work and duty in life.

I need hardly tell you,—if you have at all carefully considered the question yourselves,—that the story of our Lord's Resurrection, as told in the four Gospels, is full of difficulties.

I cannot attempt to reconcile the different accounts as we now have them, nor say what parts of them bear the stamp of historical truth, and what do not. That some portions, at all events, are legendary, cannot be doubted: how much, it is impossible to say, until the critical work, to which this age is called, shall have been more fully completed than now. But it is not my intention at the present time to point out any of those difficulties. I would rather dwell this morning upon a view of the subject which is free from all doubts, and beyond the reach of criticism. What we really believe, as Christians, is that Christ is risen,—that death and the grave have not prevailed against him,—that he who died upon the Cross, still lives,—and we, if we are faithful, if in heart and soul we have died with Christ, have also risen, shall even now live with him, and live eternally.

Such is the teaching of the Apostle in many passages :—

'We are buried with him by baptism into death ; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should *walk in newness of life*. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, *we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*. . . . If we be dead with Christ, we believe that *we shall also live with him*.'

'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.'

'God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,'—whom 'He raised from the dead, and set him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.'

What wonderful and awful words are these ! *We*, Christians, are 'raised from the dead,'—*we* 'sit in heavenly places with Christ,'—and those heavenly places are 'at God's right hand,'—where we, the body, are even now seated in glory with our head !

With him we are gone up on high,  
Since he is ours and we are his;  
With him we reign above the sky,  
We walk upon the subject seas.

We boast of our recovered powers ;  
Lords are we of the lands and floods ;  
And earth and heaven and all is ours,  
And we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Nay, as in *him*, St Paul says, dwelt 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' so *we*, he tells us, are 'the fulness of Him that filleth all in all !' The glory, that was revealed in Christ, is revealed also in our measure in us ; the Father, that dwelt in him, dwells also by the Living Word in us. These words express a great mystery, which we cannot altogether fathom. But they remind us of the greatness of our high calling to be the 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,'—'heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,'—made in our Father's image, after His likeness,—gifted with reason, conscience, will. They remind us of our glorious duty and privilege to be 'followers of God, as *dear children*.' They encourage us to be ready to suffer with Christ, the 'servant of Jehovah,' the 'man of

sorrows and acquainted with grief,' that we may be also glorified with him. For, as the Apostle says in the text—  
 'God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

St Paul, when he speaks here of 'things under the earth,' was, no doubt, thinking of Hades or Hell, as the place of departed spirits under his feet. He supposed,—as was generally believed in those days,—that the earth was flat, with heaven above and hell beneath it; and the same idea we perceive in the ancient creed of the Church, 'he descended—went down—into hell.' It is of no use to shut our eyes to such facts as these, and pretend that we can serve God or glorify Him, by refusing to use our reason upon such points,—by refusing to recognize that St Paul, after all, like the writers of the Creeds, was but a fellow-man, who, however Divinely taught upon the things of highest import,—the spiritual truths of Christ's kingdom, that kingdom of 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,'—was still left under the same influences as other men in respect of other matters, even such as concern the spiritual world, as in the case now before us. We shall show best our true regard and veneration for the Bible, by not building theories about the other world on chance expressions like these of the Scripture writers, which show only that they were not so well aware, as Modern Science has made us, of the limits of our knowledge in respect of these matters. We know now, however, that the earth is a globe; and hence we are obliged to dismiss, as unmeaning, except when used in a mystical or symbolical sense, all ideas of *above* or *below* in reference to the spirit-world. We can only speak metaphorically of ascending up into Heaven' or 'going down into Hell.' We must be satisfied with the assurance, which Christ's gospel gives us, of a 'hope full of immortality,' that, 'when absent from the body, we shall be present with the Lord.'

But the general meaning of the Apostle is plain, that he who had been brought low unto death, the death of the cross, by the Will of God, his Heavenly Father, should now by the same Will be highly exalted, so that 'every

knee should bow to his name, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' With the eye of faith, St Paul already saw this triumph achieved. His own knee had bowed—his own tongue had confessed—when he cried out to him, whom once in his saints he had persecuted, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And he saw how the Gospel had spread from land to land, how in every way Christ was preached, how God 'had made him always to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savour of His knowledge by him in every place,' how to the name of Jesus 'a crown was given, and it went on conquering and to conquer.'

But how and to what end has it conquered? The text tells us,—'to the glory of God the Father.' It was so in his life-time upon earth: it is so now. The only true glory of a man is to reflect more or less perfectly the image of God: the truer the heart, the more truly filled with love Divine, the more truly elevated,—the less will any mere personal exaltation be sought or even suffered. And he who died upon the cross, the true Son of Man, continually refused to be the object of human praise or honour: in all things he referred to the Father. 'I have glorified Thee on earth'—was the description of his whole life; and the words of his last prayer begin—

'Father, the hour is come: glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.'

In truth, the 'honour which comes from men,' and which Jesus disclaimed, has that in it, however passingly sweet and even intoxicating, which leaves a bitter taste, a painful after-sense of something false and jarring. We cannot help gathering from the accounts in the Gospels that our Lord was eminently solitary in this respect,—that even his disciples, from the level on which they stood while he was with them, could scarcely have had a glimpse of the aims, which were the moving springs of his whole life. Still less had his fellow-countrymen generally. Their voice was—'Show thyself to the world:' they wished, when they were most friendly to him, to 'make him a king.' His disciples looked for the same, and expected to share his glory:—

'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?'

'Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.'

To seek the glory of the Father, and that alone, was beyond their apprehension.

But how can any in this lower sphere seek the glory of the Eternal God? Can any created being add to or detract from that? If, indeed, we indulge in speculations about God, the Infinite, Self-Existent Being, the Ineffable Cause of His own and of all being, we shall be unable for a time to discern any relation between Him and man or the world,—as eyes gazing on the noon-day Sun behold only darkness and confusion for a time on turning away from it. But if we look at Him as He is reflected to us in the Mind of Man,—as He is revealed to us in the Son of Man, and in the hearts and lives of us, his brethren, in whom the Divine Word is dwelling,—we see that, as God's Glory must lie in the perfection of His Works, so His highest glory must consist in the perfection of His highest work, in the moral and spiritual perfection of His children. And thus it will be the burning desire of his true worshippers above all to use their powers with all their might in the correction and removal of moral and spiritual evil,—not only of wickedness and vice, but of ignorance and superstition, that so, as far as possible, each one of God's intelligent creatures may know Him more truly, and by perfecting his own being may show forth His Praise!

And how truly has the name of Jesus been exalted thus 'to the glory of God!' What countless multitudes in every age and clime have learned, in acknowledging him as their Lord, to know their Creator as their Father, as a pardoning God, as one reconciled to them, sinful as they feel themselves to be, and needing not to be appeased towards them,—have learned, while looking at the Cross, and that holy and loving one who died upon it, to interpret the clamour in their conscience as a call to repent and return to God, not as intended to drive them from Him, much less as a reason for trying to propitiate him by sacrifices worthy of demons. And, if the Cross itself has too often and too long been made a mere fetish, an instrument of superstition, so that in these days a spiritual Christian learns almost to suspect and avoid the outward sign, yet *the true doctrine of the Cross* must become ever better understood and more thoroughly appreciated, as humanity progresses in moral and spiritual culture,—the *doctrine of*

*the Cross*, I say, that is, the doctrine of love made perfect in and through suffering, the might of love brought out in the midst of utter weakness, the witness borne for the Truth of God even unto death.

However much still remains to be done before all mankind shall recognize this triumph of the Cross of Christ, much surely has been done towards it. Even now, the name of Jesus, as the type of obedience even unto death to the Will of God, is far above the proudest name among the sons of men, which owes its height to power in any form, to self-exalting might. In exalting him we feel that all human creatures are raised, since we 'are all of one,' and the meanest and weakest of the sons of men are still 'his brethren.' But also, in exalting thus the name of Jesus, we must remember always to glorify God; we must all 'confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.*' This, although so plainly expressed in the text, and in a multitude of other passages of the New Testament, has been oftentimes lost sight of by different sects in and out of the Church of Rome. They have made of Christ another and more merciful God, to whom they look to save them *from the Father*; they have so preached Christ as almost in some cases to hide the Father from us; so that, instead of being manifested in Christ as the God of Love, He has been blasphemously represented as only withheld from destroying mankind by the interposition of the Compassionate Mediator,—yea, worse, as so bent on inflicting suffering, that only the inconceivable agonies of that Mediator could satisfy Him, and persuade him to spare the guilty race! It is only a step beyond this to say that even Jesus himself needs to be approached through the compassionate intercession of his Mother! It would seem incredible if it were not an indisputable fact that the Christianity of the New Testament should have been distorted into so frightful a doctrine,—far more derogatory to the glory of the Divine Being than to set hosts of idols beside His Throne.

No! our Lord came to *lead us to the Father*, to *show us the Father*, to *manifest the Father to us*, in all His words and deeds of pity and love to bear witness to us of the Father.

'Whatsoever I speak, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.'

‘The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father, that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.’

Let us not thwart the aim of His whole ministry, of His whole life and death, by fixing our minds on him in such a way as to obscure the glory of the Father. Be sure that he would not have tolerated—he would have utterly abhorred—any such ‘bowing of the knee’ as this. To ‘confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God,’ is to take his example as the guide of our life, to glorify God as he did: it is to confess that to *save*, to take the part of the oppressed and sorrowful, to plead the cause of the helpless, to lay down cheerfully worldly joy and comfort and honour, even, if need be, life itself in so doing, is the work in which we servants desire and will endeavour to follow our Lord. It is to recognize the rights of the weak and the poor to a place at the common banquet of humanity,—to open the door wide to the returning penitent,—to charge it on our own consciences and on the consciences of others, the wealthy and powerful, the great and wise and strong ones of the earth, that we are but stewards for humankind, and not possessors for ourselves, of any talents and advantages we may have in our keeping.

Theologians may dispute—as, perhaps, they must—over the history of the Resurrection; critics may do their work for the God of Truth in sifting its details. But nothing can touch the spiritual fact that he, who died upon the cross, now liveth,—that he, who died unto sin once, now liveth eternally to God. For us, Christians, the name of Christ is exalted, as a living power, over all the earth: for us, his cross is the emblem of the victory of love, of patience, of faithfulness, through suffering. Has persecution stamped out the Truth which he taught us? Will it be ever able to do so? Has neglect or the lapse of time rendered his Divine teaching worn out and obsolete? Do his words cease to quicken, to strengthen, to comfort, to stir to the very depths our inner being? Will his example ever fail to instruct, and cheer, and stimulate us? No! in that Truth—in the assurance of our Father’s Love, of the sonship of Christ and our sonship as one with him, of the grace of the Spirit breathing on the souls of men,—in that Eternal Truth, which Christ proclaimed,—is the ark of refuge, and ever will be, for the children of men.

Let us come to-day to the Holy Table to bind ourselves anew in a bond of human fellowship, at once as brethren in the Family of God, and as followers of Christ our Head.

'As every man hath received the gift, even so let us minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that through Jesus Christ God in all things may be glorified, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'



## XI.

### SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON EASTER-DAY EVENING, APRIL 1, 1866.

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EPH. II. 6.

'AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS.'

I OBSERVED this morning that no one can read carefully the accounts of the Resurrection of Christ, as contained in the four Gospels, comparing them one with another, without finding that on many points they are at variance with each other, and present some very serious difficulties. That some portions, indeed, of these accounts are mere legendary additions, which have sprung up in the common talk of Christians, who lived long after the time of the events described, can scarcely be doubted. I will mention two instances.

In the Gospel of St Matthew—the work, remember, not of St Matthew himself, but of some unknown compiler in a later age, as Dean Alford says, who probably mixed up, with the original memoirs of the Apostle, 'much supplementary and intercalary narrative,' which he had gathered from various sources, and which he himself believed to be true,—in this Gospel, I say, we read as follows:—

'There was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.'

About this 'earthquake,' however, and the terror of the soldiers, not a word is said by either of the other three evangelists. Nor, of course, do they mention, as Matthew does, how—

'some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done,'—  
 still less that after having been thus terrified, having seen such amazing sights, and thus reported them, they consented immediately to take 'large money' from these same chief priests, and agreed to say—

'His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.'

Surely, if they had told the priests these stupendous wonders which they had just witnessed, it cannot be supposed that either the priests would have tried to bribe them, or that the soldiers would have been willing to be bribed. That 'earthquake'—that 'angel'—

'whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow—for fear of whom the keepers did shake, and became as dead men'—

must have effectually taught both the one party and the other that the Almighty Power of God was here, and that it was madness to resist it. They must have felt that he, who had been raised from the grave under such awful circumstances, might appear at any moment to refute their lying story, to confound their crafty plans, and to inflict on them a vengeance infinitely beyond any punishment to be feared from the Roman Governor.

Again, the same writer tells us that, when Jesus died—  
 'the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose; and they came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.'

As before, nothing whatever is said in the other three Gospels about the 'earth quaking' at this moment, or about the 'rocks rending,' and the 'graves being opened,' and the many bodies of the dead saints arising, 'going into the holy city, and appearing unto many.' For all this we have only the single testimony of this unknown compiler.

But the question at once arises, What does he really mean to say? Does he tell us that the bodies of these saints,—not saints of the olden times, we must suppose, but persons who had but lately died, otherwise they could not have been recognized, when they appeared, by those still living in Jerusalem,—does he tell us that the bodies of these saints were raised, indeed, when the earthquake-shock, at the moment of the last expiring cry of Jesus,

rent the rocks and opened the graves ; but that, although they arose, and came out of their sepulchres, they did not enter the holy city till 'after his resurrection' ? Where, then, were these saints thus raised from their dead,—not disembodied spirits, but having bodily forms, for 'many *bodies* of the saints which slept arose,'—during the (so-called) three-days' interval between the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ ? And how would this fact accord with the statement of St Paul, that Jesus himself was the 'firstfruits of them that slept,' the 'firstborn from the dead' ? Accordingly, Dean Alford says :

The graves were opened *at the moment of the death* of the Lord. But inasmuch as he is the firstfruits from the dead, the Resurrection and the Life, the bodies of the saints in them *did not rise till he rose*, and, having appeared to many after his Resurrection,—possibly during the forty days,—went up with him into his glory.

Thus the Dean supposes that the graves lay open, with the bodies of the dead exposed, during the interval between the death and the resurrection of Christ,—these graves being, it is true, not mere pits, dug in the ground, as ours are, but excavations in the solid rock, according to the custom of the Jews of that day, — yet open all the more to the entrance of wild animals, beasts or birds, to disturb the recently-buried remains. When raised, however, on the third day, he supposes that they never returned to the grave again, but appeared on earth—perhaps, during the whole forty days before the Ascension—'unto many in the holy city,' and then went up with Christ to his glory. It need hardly be said that the Scripture story says not a word about any such an addition to the glory of our Lord's Ascension.

The present Archbishop of York gives a very different account of the matter, though he passes over much of the difficulty of the case. His words are these (*Dict. of the Bible*, I.p.1070) :—

There was a great earthquake. Many, who were dead, rose from the graves, although they *returned to the dust again* after this great token of Christ's quickening power had been given to many. They were 'saints' that slept : probably those, who had most earnestly longed for the salvation of Christ, were the first to taste the fruits of his conquest of death.

The Archbishop does not tell us *when* these bodies of buried saints 'rose from the graves,' or *when* they 'returned to the dust again.' Nor does he touch at all upon the ques-

tion of the guards being bribed to give a false account of what had happened,—as absurd as false, for how could they have known that ‘the disciples came by night and stole him away,’ if they were sleeping at the time? But in reference to the Archbishop’s own explanation an ancient writer (Remigius) says—

Such words as these are not to be listened to for a moment; since the misery of those who had thus risen, and had then to die a second time, would be greater than if they had never risen at all.

Surely, it is far better, instead of making these wild attempts to maintain the literal infallibility of every statement of an unknown compiler, merely because it is found in a book, which was separated by the early Church from other—the (so-called) apocryphal—books, not because it was known to have been written by an apostle, or because it was deemed infallible, but because it was *thought to be more true*, more worthy of respect than they,—it is far better, I say, to admit at once the legendary character of such narratives, and to believe that God’s Love to us, as declared by Jesus Christ, and as revealed and ministered to us in his life and in his death, is altogether independent of the truth and falsehood of any such details. We cannot make God’s Love more sure to us, by insisting on that, as being fact, which will not bear a reasonable examination. Nor, thank God! will the loss of any number of such details—if we should be compelled by the force of truth to relinquish them—diminish in any way the Eternal Love of our Heavenly Father towards us. Those uncanonical, apocryphal books abound, as we know, with such legends. For instance, the book, called the Gospel of Nicodemus, contains a full account of the crucifixion, which does not differ materially from those which we find in the canonical Gospels; it mentions, however, the names of the two thieves, Gestas and Dimas; it states that ‘the rocks were rent, and the graves opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose,’—not, however, *after* the expiring cry of Jesus, as we find it in St Matthew, but *before* it. And then it describes at great length what passed in hell (that is, not the place of torment, but the abode of the dead, according to the notions of the people of those times), when the conqueror came there,—the imagination of the writer, apparently, revelling in describing the affairs of the

invisible world, like that of our own great poet Milton, who has helped so much to corrupt and distort our English theology. And all this is given on the testimony of two, who were among the number of those very 'saints,' who 'came out of their graves' at the time of the crucifixion, and who begin their narrative by saying :—

When we were placed with our fathers in the depth of hell, in the blackness of darkness, on a sudden there appeared the colour of the Sun like gold, and a substantial purple-coloured light enlightening the place. Presently, upon this, Adam, the father of all mankind, with all the patriarchs and prophets, rejoiced and said, 'That light is the author of everlasting light, who hath promised to translate us to everlasting light.'

Then Isaiah, and the aged Simeon, and John the Baptist deliver their testimony, and announce the speedy coming of Christ, that is, his 'descent into hell':—

The dayspring from on high will come to us, who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

Next Satan, the prince and captain of death, bids the prince of hell prepare to receive the royal prisoner; but the latter fears to do so, and while they are discoursing,—

On a sudden, there 'was a voice as of thunder and the rushing of winds, saying, 'Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, O everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.'

I need not make further quotations. These will be sufficient to show you how readily in those days stories were coined about the sayings and doings of Jesus, filling up every part of his life, his very infancy and childhood, the years of his activity, the hour of death,—nay, as you have just heard, the time after his death,—with miracles and prodigies,—as if these were not the things, which rather hindered the advance of a true and living Christianity, a true belief in the Divine Mission of Jesus and in his Divine Work,—instead of promoting it. True faith and love, in fact, were becoming cold in those days; and true religion, as taught by our Lord himself, was degenerating into a system of forms and ceremonies, into notions about the efficacy of Sacraments and the mystical power of Apostolical Succession. An 'evil and adulterous generation' was seeking after signs and wonders; and the demand of the age was satisfied by writers—apparently in the main devout and well-meaning men—like the author of this apocryphal Gospel, or Augustine and Jerome in later days, who

did not scruple to compose and publish the most contemptible falsehoods, and present them to the 'faithful' of those days, that is, to the credulous and uninquiring, as unquestionable truths.

Nevertheless, the very attempts to irradiate, as it were, the life of Jesus with these fictitious accounts of his doings before and after death, show plainly what a mighty effect his teaching must have had upon the people of his time, what a lasting impression it must have left upon the world, how truly he must have spoken 'as man never spake.' From that narrow district, in which he had lived and died, his word had gone forth to all the ends of the earth. They, who wept him as dead, and returned to their homes, smiting upon their hearts and sorrowing, from that bloody scene, by which all their hopes seemed to be crushed for ever, were gladdened with the joyful conviction that he had conquered death, that he was still living, that—

'being raised from the dead, he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.'

As I said this morning, there are perplexities and contradictions in the gospel narratives, which we cannot unravel: some portions of them certainly—how much we cannot say—are of a legendary character. But the one central truth in which we rejoice, the light which especially brightens and gladdens the hearts of Christian men on Easter-Day, is to know that though 'Jehovah's Servant,' the 'Messenger of the New Covenant,' the Son of Man, who brought us our Father's words of Eternal Life, was 'wounded' and 'bruised' even unto death, yet death 'had no dominion over him'; by the power of the Living Word that dwelt in him, by the glory of the Father, he overcame death, and, having died unto sin once, now liveth unto God eternally. And his triumph over death is a pledge of our own: nay, says the apostle, we are even now 'risen with Christ,' we are even now with him 'alive unto God,' and have thus the foretaste of eternal life. We are even now 'reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ,'—through his Divine Ministry of love, 'having received abundance of grace and of the life of righteousness.' For, in the words of the text,—

'God, who is rich in mercy, for His great Love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'

In this passage evidently the apostle is not speaking of a return of the body from the grave, but of a spiritual resurrection, yea, an ascension into a higher sphere, which he claims for all true disciples of Jesus. The hope of immortality, of a future life, is indeed unspeakably brightened by the consciousness that we are living even now a life above sense, 'in heavenly places,'—that we have even now, as St John says, 'fellowship with God,'—by the consciousness, in other words, that 'to know God is Life Eternal.' And the very imperfection of that fellowship in this world points to another world for its fulfilment, where, as St Paul says, we shall see face to face, instead of as now through a glass darkly, where we shall know, not as now in part, but even as we are known.

But through Christ it is, says the Apostle, through the work which he has done, and the message which he has brought us, that we have been raised from death, and sit in heavenly places, and reign in life, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. From the first dawn of human reason our Father has been revealing Himself more and more to the children of men. But the fulness of this Love has been revealed to us in Christ.

The history of man is, in fact, the history of religion, the history of the revelation of the Living God—of Him, the 'God of our fathers,' who 'was, and is, and is to be.' If the worship of man seems in some respects to be an attempt to bring down to his help some Power above him, in order to control the unruly elements, to avert disaster, and attain more perfectly the satisfaction which his animal nature requires,—in order to secure the plenteous harvest, to cross the seas in safety, to avert the pestilence and other ills which flesh is heir to,—these things are not sufficient to account for the history of creeds, for the history of belief and of the *believing animal*!

'Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even into His presence'!—

this cry, though wrung from the lips of the sufferer, is not less the cry of the human heart in the midst of its earthly joys, in the midst of the peace and plenty of the senses. In all lands, in every age, men have cried to One above them, and in the midst of childish, of grotesque, superstition, that cry has been heard and answered,—for it was a cry

that reached a Father's ears,—and faith has reposed upon the bosom of supernatural Power. Unseen, unknown, or known in dim glimpses and by images fearfully distorted, Power alone has been very often a refuge for weakness.

But gradually the race has progressed in spiritual knowledge and development,—a progress due to that nature which the Author of our being has bestowed upon us, and to that Fatherly Love which has revealed more and more the Divine Excellencies to the minds of His children. The necessity arose to worship what was *good*, and not merely what was *mighty*. By degrees, more and more, the mists of superstition have cleared away, partially indeed and by patches, as it were, as when the mountains look through the morning, and the Truth has become revealed that Love alone, Holy Love, is the Lord of the Universe; and now we are 'made to sit in heavenly places,' bright with the glory of the Presence of God.

This Truth, which flowed pure from the lips of Jesus, and in many utterances of his first disciples, has been the real principle of permanence in the Christian Church,—though oftentimes almost hidden from sight by the manifold aberrations of the human intellect. Still occupied about God, still misled by the shadows falling from his own imperfections, especially the imperfections of his moral nature, man has built up an edifice of superstition around the teaching of the Founder of the faith, which is only paralleled by the worship of Greece and Rome, so freely stigmatized by Christians as heathenism,—in which the worship of the Saints and Angels obscures from view the throne of the Only True God, and the female divinities of old are replaced by Mary, ever Virgin, Mother of God and Full of Grace.

We live, however, under happier circumstances, and in an age in which the marvels of Science have taken the place of ecclesiastical miracles, in which the ways of the Creator are shown to us in the deeps of earth and the heights of heaven, in which dominion is given to man more and more over all the creatures of God. Let us not therefore sink into materialism, denying our nobler selves, by stopping short of God. The study of material nature alone will not bring us to that central verity,—



The trust, that God is Good indeed,  
 And Love Creation's final Law . . . .  
 No! Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shrieks against the Creed!

But, if we turn to the history of man, will the law of the stronger, will the principle of selfishness, account for its phenomena? On a superficial view they might, but not to a deeper and more true insight; and history is apt to deceive, because it demands great labour and larger faculties than are granted to many. And a partial view may be made to support any theory,—just as, we know, texts of Scripture can be found, and have been found, which, misinterpreted and misapplied, will help to support the wildest systems of belief. But let each one take the experience of his own life, or what he has known of other men, perhaps nobler than himself; and let each one ask, Is it possible to account for the facts of the lives of those of my fellow-men, whom I have deemed it an honour to know,—not to speak of the heroes and martyrs, at whose names all our hearts beat, claiming fellowship with them,—or can I account for my own course, since I can remember it,—by referring all to the seekings and findings of self-love, of self-interest alone,—even of the most enlightened self-love?

The true heart recoils from such a thought, and sees a far truer picture of what is best in himself and in other men in the words of Christ—

‘Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel’s—that is, for the sake of truth and love—shall find it,’—

sees it in all the words of Jesus, which form a Gospel of *Love*,—of love to God as God, not for the sake of what He will give us, here or hereafter,—of love to man as man, as the child of God, and therefore of love to all, the least, the meanest. This Gospel, working a true human life after Christ’s example, a life of purity, of self-sacrifice, of suffering, not as merit, but the suffering of love,—this Gospel is the most precious possession of humanity. It is more precious than Science, than the sublime revelations of Astronomy and Geology, than all the powers, the enjoyments, the possessions, which the knowledge of material laws confers, and is daily conferring on our race. Without this Gospel, though enriched with all these good gifts

of God's grace, though brightened with all glory raying down from the Father of lights, we should still be but dwellers on earth, we should be of the earth, earthy, we *might* even be, though endowed with all this wisdom, but men of the world, 'earthly, sensual, devilish.'

But the Gospel of Love, as ministered to us in the life and death of Jesus, is God's unspeakable gift, which throws around the humblest and poorest of our race, the weak and ignorant, as well as the most learned and powerful, a Flood of Divine Light. By it we 'sit in heavenly places with Christ.' We sit, as it were, with him, our Elder Brother, beside our Father's throne, and look down upon the whole Creation, bright with the wonders of His Wisdom, Righteousness, and Love. And we shall see greater triumphs yet of the Cross; while no progress of the race can carry it beyond the culminating point, of perfect obedience and perfect trust in the Faithfulness and Love of God. We shall yet see, or rather there will yet be seen, a more extensive moral and spiritual regeneration, through the truths of the Gospel better understood, than has ever blessed the eyes of men. He lives and reigns in the hearts of men, who once was 'rejected and despised' by them, who was 'wounded' and 'bruised,' who suffered and died. And he shall reign until the truth, which he spake, shall be the joy and strength of every heart, and every tongue shall say—

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And shall be, though as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompassed by his faithful guard,  
And hear at times a sentinel,  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## XII.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 8, 1866.

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ST LUKE XI. 2.

'AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, WHEN YE PRAY, SAY, "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."'

IN these words our Lord Jesus Christ assumes that his disciples will have need of prayer: 'When ye pray, say.' He takes it for certain that they and we, and all who in every age desire to do the will of God, to live the lives of true children of God, will find it comforting, refreshing, strengthening, for the spirit—rather will find it necessary, not as a mere duty, but as a means of quickening the soul with new life, and sustaining its powers in health and activity,—to draw near to the Throne of God in prayer. He knew well by his own experience what was in man; he had to 'put his trust in God,' even as we his brethren, to 'pour out his heart before Him,' to 'make his requests known unto God;' he himself prayed often, upon the mountain-side, in the watches of the night, in the presence of his disciples at their last evening meal, or alone in spirit, amidst the garden solitudes, with his three weary followers sleeping beside him, or hanging upon the cross, in the terrible hour of his last great agony. And he knew that we too shall need to pray,—that times will come in our lives when we shall feel that no earthly friends can help us, not the dearest and tenderest, not the wisest and strongest,—that none can help us but the Living God,—times when we shall feel that with Him alone we have now to do,—when the loving child will throw itself upon its Father's Bosom, and enjoy, in a sense of peaceful calm,

the precious fruits of a life of faith and obedience,—when the stubborn knee also may be bent, and the hard heart broken, and lips, unused to pray, may break forth at last into the cry, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ He knew that we should all have need, some time or other, to pray; and he said unto his disciples, ‘When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in Heaven.’

There are none here, of course, to whom these words are not familiar from their earliest childhood: we know not when we first began to use them. We were taught them first, most probably, by mothers’ lips; we learned them, as children, in the Catechism; and our Church, by inserting the prayer so often in her different services, has taken care that we shall not forget it. It is true, the Lord’s Prayer, in our present long and complex service, is repeated more frequently than was originally intended—*four* times at least in the Morning Service,—*five* times, if there be a Communion,—*six* times, if any occasional service besides,—*seven* times, if it be used in the pulpit. It might be well, certainly—especially in a climate like ours—if the present Service were shortened, and reduced to its original length. Still, the fact would remain the same, that our Church has set this prayer before us once or twice in every one of her services; and has done so, of course, with the express intention that we shall not only use it as a form of supplication, but drink, as it were, into its very spirit, and make its petitions the model of our own. ‘When ye pray, say’—cannot possibly mean that we are *only* to use these identical words in prayer; for then all Christians in every age will have violated their Lord’s direction. But they must mean *something*; and, if they do not mean that, they can only imply that this is to be the method of our prayers,—that these words are to give the type and example, according to which our Lord would have his disciples to pray. We may use other words, in which to express the desires of our hearts, our ascriptions of praise, our petitions for the relief of our necessities, our confessions of sin, our prayers for forgiveness. We may not even pray in words at all, but in the silence of our hearts, while engaged in our different daily duties, may be looking up to God for guidance, help, and blessing. But we must pray always ‘after this manner.’ The spirit of our prayers—nay, since we

are taught to 'pray always,' to 'pray without ceasing,' 'in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make our requests known unto God,' the spirit of our thoughts, of our daily life, must be in full accordance with that of our Lord's Prayer, if we would be true children of the Church of England,—rather, if we would be true followers of Christ.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose, as many do, that our Lord originated the language of this prayer,—that he was the first to express in words such petitions as these. As a *form of prayer*, no doubt, he did originate it; that is, he was the first to put together in this order the series of petitions which make up the Lord's Prayer. But the petitions themselves already existed, and were familiar, no doubt, to some at least of his disciples in the worship of their own countrymen. As one has written (Bloomfield, *Gr. Test. note on Matt. vi. 9*)—

The whole of it, with the exception of the clause, 'as we forgive our debtors,' is, in substance, found in the nineteen prayers of the Jewish Liturgy.

No! it was not necessary for him to invent new phrases to be used in prayer by his disciples,—except, perhaps, that wonderful addition to the prayer for forgiveness, in which is contained the essence of Christian practice, of brotherly kindness and charity, 'as we forgive our debtors,' 'as we forgive them that trespass against us.' The Spirit of God had awakened already in men's hearts those feelings and desires, which had found expression in these utterances. The Spirit of God will still be 'helping our infirmities,' 'teaching us how to pray,' making intercession for us with groanings which are not uttered.' It is not, I repeat, the mere *language* of the Lord's Prayer, which is of so much importance to us, as a type and example of what our own prayers should be. It is the *spirit* in which—the manner after which—he teaches us to pray,—the tone, as it were, which is heard resounding throughout these petitions, which he has here selected from the common stock of those employed in the worship of his countrymen,—and even the very *order* in which he has arranged them. For the key-note sounds in the very first words, 'Our Father which art in Heaven'; and, if we truly realize the depth of meaning which these contain for us,

we shall feel then how naturally run the first petitions,—not for the supply of our wants, but for the advancement of God's glory,—‘Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven,’—and all these petitions put into our mouths before we are taught to ask for ‘daily bread,’—and a prayer for that following next in order, before we are to say, ‘Forgive us our sins, Lead us not into temptation, Deliver us from evil,’—and all these prayers grounded upon the fact that, as the Great God in Heaven is our Father, so ‘His is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory,’—they all belong to that Blessed Being, in whose Almighty Love we are embraced as children.

‘The Eternal God is our Refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms.’

‘Our Father which art in Heaven.’ Let us consider a little more closely this morning the force of these words, which give the key-note, as I have said, of the whole prayer, the watch-word of our whole life.

(i) The very essence of the Gospel is the revelation of the Fatherhood of God. This truth was not unknown indeed in the days of old, when the Psalmist wrote—

‘As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him’—

or when the Prophet cried—

‘But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter, and we are all the work of Thine Hand.’

Yet even here, in this prophetic passage, and in others like it, the reference is rather to Jehovah as the Father and Saviour of the *Jewish* people,—specially, of the pious and God-fearing among them. It is Christ, who has taught us all, of every clime and country, of every age, of every character, the sinful and sin-burdened, the publican and prodigal, as well as the faithful and pure in heart,—‘when we pray, to say, Our Father.’ It is he who has taught us this, not only directly by his lips, as here, but by his whole ministry in life and death,—by his sympathy with human sorrow, his pitiful compassion for the fallen and outcast, the ignorant and wandering,—by the love wherewith he loved his own even unto the end,—by his prayer for forgiveness, which he breathed upon the cross for his murderers,—showing forth continually the ‘kindness and love to-

wards man' of the Father who sent him, of the Father in whose name he spoke, of the Father who 'dwelt in him.'

Thus our Lord teaches us concerning God and His relations to us, not by multiplying a list of attributes, which, though we strain our faculties to the uttermost to grasp them, one by one, transcend each, in its infinite grandeur, the power of the human mind to conceive and imagine, and are still more inconceivable in their union. Not by such abstractions as these does Jesus teach us respecting Him, who is the Fountain of our life and being. He bids us say to Him, 'Our Father.' The truest, nearest view for us of the Great First Cause of all, the Ruler of the Universe, the Lord of the conscience and of the heart, is that which we gain from our knowledge of what a human parent may and ought to be. How gracious and merciful is this revelation of God's Love to us, by means of that which the poorest and 'weakest of the sons of men, the most untrained and ignorant, can yet most fully understand, though they cannot explain!

Doubtless, no Father, who has had himself much moral and spiritual culture, was ever satisfied with any realization of the idea of what a Father should be, or believed himself to have fulfilled a Father's duties to the uttermost. And, alas! among the lower strata of humanity, specially among the dregs of civilization, in which humanity is not so much undeveloped as corrupted and decayed,—parents may too often be found, who are not merely careless, but cruel to their offspring. Yet to men in general, the name of 'Father' is no empty term,—it has a dear and sacred meaning,—even though the unhappy man who bears it be sunk ever so low, and by his fault the son may very probably be sunk still lower; and then, perhaps, to such a son as this, the fallen one will *not* be sacred still, because he is his father, to be covered and screened from shame, to be helped and comforted, to be raised, if possible, from the misery in which he lies, to be remembered still in his deepest degradation. Yet only in such a case as this will the power of that holy word be lost. And this reverence for parents, which we find existing in such force amongst many savage tribes,—as for instance amongst the natives of this land,—is the very seed or germ of true religion. It is natural piety, and a far better basis for Christian in-

struction than the fears and hopes of what may happen after death, which missionaries are so apt to make the great staple of their teaching.

What then, let us ask, should an earthly Father be, since his very name is something sacred, since he sets forth to us, and is meant to set forth to us continually, by a lively image, the Fatherhood of God?

*Care* for his children is the first thing that we look for in a parent,—that he ‘provide for his own, specially for those of his own house.’ To exercise a watchful providence over them for good,—to meet the wants of their childhood and youth, which they are not able themselves to meet,—to prepare them by the best teaching and training within his power, for doing their duties in future life, and becoming independent of his care,—to direct especially that care towards what is most precious in them, in proportion as he himself possesses a greater insight into the destiny of human creatures,—to make them, as far as his influence can do so, ‘fellow-workers with God,’ for their own good and for the good of others,—to teach them self-control, to kindle in their hearts that sacred flame of love to God and to their kind, which will raise them above those low selfish aims, those plots and plans for what is called success in life, or making a figure in the world, which too much disfigure the course of many of us,—such will surely be a Christian parent’s desire and endeavour for his children. For this he may sometimes even sacrifice what worldly men may call their interest,—seeking not to build up a house for his own glory and credit by their means,—seeking ‘not theirs, but them,’ and that ‘he and his house should serve the Lord.’

This is not the time to inquire how amongst the many cares and calls of life such objects may be best attained. I say merely, what all will allow, that a Christian Father, if he be as much a Christian as a Father, cannot but have these objects in view for his children. And, as such, he is a type and pattern to us of Him, ‘our Father in Heaven,’ who ‘chastises us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His Holiness,’—who ‘knows the way that we take,’—who ‘leads us by His Counsel,’ that He may ‘bring us to His Glory,’—who has placed us in this world of mingled joy and sorrow, failure and success, as the best place, the



best state of things, to draw out in us the truly Human and the truly Divine.

But *sympathy* with his children, with their joys and sorrows, with their feelings and efforts, is another point in respect of which a Father transcends, or should do, every other friend. Among the most sublime examples of human virtue have been those in which fathers, like Jephthah in the Hebrew story, or Brutus in the Roman, have sacrificed their children to what they deemed to be the claims of duty,—to the call of God, as they thought, of right, or of their country. But we know that the father, who sends his son to death for some high and holy cause, sends him with bursting heart, though perhaps with a calm or even exulting face; he makes a greater sacrifice, and suffers more deeply, than the young warrior himself, who goes forth to do, and dare, and die. It is but *nature*, we say, that speaks here: it is but *natural* that so it should be. Nay, rather it is the Great Father of all, present by His Spirit in the heart of that earthly parent, present in many kindred hearts, which know Him perhaps but faintly, if at all,—present, I say, in such as these, and witnessing thus to us all of His own Infinite perfections, and of His own deep sympathy with those who suffer in doing His Will, of His Fatherly Love to all His Children. It is His Voice which speaks in those parental utterances: it is His Mark set upon humankind, as made in His Image. And as the attribute of sympathizing pity is more conspicuous in the weaker parent, so the Prophet teaches us how we may think of God, not as a Father only, but as a Mother too, when he says—

‘Can a mother forget her sucking-child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget: yet will not I forget thee.’

We are to come, then, to a Father in prayer, to One who has created us in His own likeness, after His own image,—not like the brutes that perish,—but gifted with reason, conscience, will, by which we may have communion with Him, may glorify Him in our duties upon earth, with the reasonable service of obedient, loving children, and grow daily in the knowledge of Himself, whom truly to know is Life Eternal. We are to come to One, who has watched over, preserved, and blessed us all our lives long,—has

supplied us with daily bounties, brought us through trials, delivered us from dangers,—has led us thus far safely,—it may be often by a way which we knew not,—and will lead us still on to the end,—whose very chastisements have been a sign of Fatherly care to us, whose ‘loving corrections’ will help to ‘make us great.’ We are to come to One, who has been with us all along, making known to us a Father’s Presence, not only by the love of earthly parents, of father, mother, husband, brother, friend,—all tenderest names of human relationship, which faintly shadow forth to us under various aspects—and are meant to shadow forth to us—that Love, which is the fount and spring of all our love,—but by a thousand other gracious signs, by the green fields and the flowers beside our pathway, by the wondrous beauty of the earth, the sea, and the sky, which we are gifted with powers to enjoy, and to realize in some faint measure the glory of the Universe. We are to come to One, who has been speaking to us also by the lips of our fellow-men of other days, by Prophets and Apostles, ‘at sundry times and in divers manners,’ and at last by the mouth of the Son of Man himself, and who is speaking even now by His Spirit within our hearts continually, enabling us to discern the right, the good, and the true, teaching us to love it, helping us to follow it, saying to each one of us continually, ‘Wilt thou not from henceforth cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?’

‘Yea, and to old age I am He;  
And to hoar hairs will I carry :  
I have made and I will bear ;  
Even I will carry and deliver.’

(ii) But here is another thought brought before us,—‘Our Father which art in Heaven.’ We may say, ‘My Father,’ each in the sense of his own private needs, sorrows, sins, infirmities. We are not forbidden to do this; and many of the Psalms will give us an example of such prayers. Yet the true spirit of a Christian prayer, the spirit in which our Lord has taught us to pray, is that which remembers always that God is ‘Our Father,’ that He loves us—blesses us—cares for us *all*. Has He not endowed us—beyond those Divine gifts of reason, conscience, will, by which we are made in the moral and

spiritual likeness of God—with the power of *speech* also, by which we can have converse with our kind, by which the experience of past ages has come down to our own, and the wisdom of the good and great, who have lived before us,—the advance which by God's grace they have been enabled to make in things earthly and Divine,—is made the stepping-stone for us to yet further discoveries of our Father's Glory and Goodness? It is a great comfort to feel this, to know that one and the self-same Spirit is teaching us all, to find in the Bible the record of the religious thought of men who lived in other days, two or three thousand years ago, and to realize, while we ponder their words, or use their very language of prayer and praise, as the most fitting utterance for our own hearts' desires, that we are 'all of One,'—that the 'God of our fathers' is our God, and shall be our children's, Jehovah, the Living God, who 'was, and is, and is to be,'—that in all regions of the earth, at all times, in all places, for all the members of the great Human Family, there is One to whom we all may look and say, 'Our Father.' And Christ, our Lord, let us remember, did the same. He spoke of his Father continually; but he never forgot that He is our Father also,—his Father and our Father, his God and our God. He prayed, in fact, in such words as these:—

'Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one with us.'

(iii) But we are further taught to say, 'Our Father which art in *Heaven*,'—which 'eminently art where spirits conformed to Thy Will have blissful intuition of Thy Presence.'—(S. T. Coleridge.)

Is God then not *here*? Or can any place whatever either contain or enclose Him? The ancients, indeed, thought of the Throne of God as above the rolling clouds, above the stars, beyond the moon, beyond the glorious sun—dwelling there in glory unapproachable, a glory 'dark with excess of light.' Yet said the Hebrew King, 'Behold, Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee': and the Prophet cries—

'Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy, "I dwell in the high and holy place, but with him

that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

When we are taught to say, ‘Our Father which art in Heaven,’ we are not therefore to think of Heaven as localized somewhere above our heads, or to think of God as dwelling exclusively in any place, in glory unapproachable to mortal man, since He dwells even now by His Word, by His Spirit, within us. But the language reminds us of the Greatness and Majesty of God,—that, though He is in very deed and truth Our Father, we may not presume upon His Goodness, we may not make light of His Love. It reminds us that, only where Heaven is, only where heavenly thoughts and pure desires are cherished, whether in this world or in the world beyond the grave, there will be realized the Presence of God. HE IS, indeed, everywhere, in every place, in all things: ‘in Him we live and move and have our being:’ in Him the whole creation subsists. But to *realize*—to *feel*—His Presence, we must have the hearts of children, of true, loving, obedient children:—

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!’

It is to these He manifests Himself, and not unto the world—not unto hearts filled with worldly passions, aims, and desires: it is to these He ‘comes, and makes His abode with them.’ May this blessedness be ours!

‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! And it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man, that hath this hope in Him, purifieth Himself even as He is pure.’

## XIII.

### PRAYER TO CHRIST.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1866.

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ST LUKE XI. 2.

'AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, WHEN YE PRAY, SAY, "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."'

THESE words of our Lord's Prayer, as I observed this morning, remind us continually of this, that 'One is our Father, even God, and all we are brethren.' They remind us that we are all 'one in Christ,'—that we are all embraced in that message of love, which Christ has brought us from our Father, the 'good tidings of great joy for *all mankind*.' This brotherhood of men, as children of God, is the counterpart and consequence of that essential truth of the Gospel, which teaches us the Fatherhood of God. And as one has said (Prof. Jowett, *Epistles*, ii. p. 141),—

The idea of this brotherhood of all mankind, the great family on earth, implies that all men have certain ties with us, and certain rights at our hands. The truest way, in which we can regard them, is as they appear in the sight of God, from whom they can never suffer wrong, nor from us, while we think of them as His creatures equally with ourselves. There is yet a closer bond with them as our brethren in the Gospel. No one can interpose impediments of rank, or fortune, or colour, or religious opinion, between those who are one in Christ. Beyond and above such transitory differences is the work of Christ 'making all things kin.' Moreover, the remembrance of this brotherhood is a rest to us when 'our light is low,' and the world and its distinctions are passing out of sight, and our thoughts are of the dark valley and the solitary way. For it leads us to trust in God, not as selecting us [as individuals], but as infinitely just to all mankind. It links our fortune with those of men in general, and gives us the same support in reference to our eternal destiny, that we receive from each other, in a narrower sphere, in the concerns of our daily life. To think of ourselves, or our church, or our country, or our

age, as the particular exceptions which a Divine Mercy makes, whether in this life or another, is not a thought of comfort but of perplexity. Lastly, it relieves us from anxiety about the condition of other men, of friends departed, of those ignorant of the Gospel, of those of a different form of faith from our own; knowing that God, who has thus far lifted up the veil, 'will justify the Circumcision through faith and the Uncircumcision by faith,'—the Jew, who, 'fulfils the Law,' and the Gentile, who 'does by nature the things contained in the Law.'

Above all, at a time like the present, it is blessed to realize the thought 'Our Father,'—to look down, as it were, from this vantage-ground, and be able to think hopefully and with brotherly love of those, who differ from us, however extremely, in matters of religion, and even though they may have no hope, no charitable thoughts, for us,—to be able to feel that we are all under the teaching of the same Almighty, All-Wise, All-Gracious, God and Saviour, who gives to all liberally light and life according to their need, and upbraideth not those that come to ask for more, —who has led them by their path, and us by ours. Those paths, indeed, may part us here on earth from one another; and differences of training, faculties, mental temperament, and other circumstances, may lead to differences of creed, to divergencies of faith and practice. Yet still One Fatherly Love embraces all, 'is above all, and through all, and in us all'; One Living Word is the Light and Life of all; One Spirit is the Guide and Guardian of all. And, whatever the path, if we follow at his bidding the way that lies before us, and appears to us to be the right way, the way of truth, the way of duty, it will surely be to us the way of safety, the way of blessedness,—it will surely lead us home. Only let us see that we walk worthily of our high calling,—worthily of that Name, 'which is called upon us,' 'upon which we call,' as the Name of our Lord, when we profess and call ourselves Christians,—worthily of Him of whom it is written—

'I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

'After this manner,' therefore,—in this spirit,—we must pray, if we will be true Christians, followers of Christ, obedient to His Word. You observe, our Lord teaches us to pray always to God, to God our Father,—not to the Virgin Mary, not to the Saints, as the Roman-Catholics

do,—not even to Christ, as many Protestants do, departing thus from the direct teaching of Jesus himself, and the example of his apostles. Our Lord's words in the text are plain and unmistakable,—‘When ye pray say, “*Our Father* which art in Heaven.”’ Again, he says elsewhere;—

‘Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to *thy Father* which is in secret; for *your Father* knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask *Him*.’

And again he reasons—

‘If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall *your Father* which is in Heaven give good things—give the Holy Spirit—to them that ask *Him*?’

He has taught us also to ‘ask in his name’—

‘Whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*,’—‘if ye shall ask anything *in my name*,’—‘whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father in my name*,’—‘hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name*; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.’

And hence Christians are described as ‘calling upon the name’ of Christ, Acts ix.14,21, 1Cor.i.2, invoking that name, and pleading it, as a pledge of their Father's Love to them, in making their requests known unto God. Hence, also, is derived the practice of our Church in concluding almost all its prayers with the phrase ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ But nowhere does our Lord teach us to pray to *himself*. By his own example, of course, he has taught us continually to pray to *the Father*; and by all the lessons of his lips, as we have just heard, he does the same. In no single instance does he give any encouragement for the practice, which is becoming of late so very common, of praying directly, not to the Father, but to Christ.

It may be said, these lessons were intended only for the time *then present*,—during the days when Christ lived upon earth: though indeed it would be strange if, being expressly asked to teach a prayer to his disciples, he should have taught them a form, which they might set aside at their pleasure after he was taken from them, more especially as there is not the slightest hint of his having given them any advice or direction, or even permission, to do so. But, when we turn to the writings of St Paul, we find that he adheres strictly to the pattern which his Lord had set to him. In a multitude of passages he speaks of prayer addressed to God:—

‘My heart's desire and *prayer to God*,’ R.x.1. ‘Strive together in

your *prayers to God* for me,' xv.30. '*The same Lord* [meaning here, as the context shows, Almighty God] is rich unto all that *call upon Him*, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,' x. 12,13. 'Is it comely that a woman *pray unto God* uncovered?' 1C.xi. 13.' 'Now I *pray to God* that ye do no evil,' 2Cor.xiii.7. 'In everything by prayer and supplication *let your requests be made known unto God*,' Phil.iv.6.

He says—

'*I bow my knees unto the Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Eph.iii.14.

He renders continually glory and thanksgiving to God:—

'*I thank my God*,' R.i.8, 1C.i.3,xiv.18, Phil.i.3, Philem.4. '*God be thanked!*' vi.17. '*I thank God*,' vii.25, 1C.i.14, 2Tim.i.3. '*Thanks be to God!*' 1C.xv.57, 2C.ii.14, viii.16, ix.15. '*Blessed be God!*' Eph.i.3.

'*We give thanks to God and the Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,' Col.i.3. '*We give thanks to God* always for you all,' 1Th.i.2. '*Thank we God* without ceasing,' ii.13. '*What thanks can we render to God* for you?' iii.9. 'We are bound to *thank God* always for you,' 2Th.i.3,ii.13.

He speaks of a man—

'*worshipping God*,' 1C.xiv.25, '*speaking to himself and to God*,' 1C. xiv.28, '*glorifying God*,' R.xv.6, 1C.xv.9, 2C.ix.13, bringing '*thanksgiving to God*,' 2C.ix.11,12, *giving thanks unto the Father*,' Col.i.1.

He bids us—

'*give thanks always for all things unto God* and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Eph.v.20, 'whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God and the Father* by him,' Col.iii.17.

And he exclaims, ascribing glory to God—

'*to God only wise be glory* through Jesus Christ for ever!' R.xvi.27,

'*unto God and our Father be glory* for ever and ever!' Phil.iv.20,—

'*unto Him*, that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *unto Him be glory* in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end!' Eph.iii.20,21,—

'*unto the King Eternal*, Immortal, Invisible, *the Only Wise God*, *be honour and glory* for ever and ever!' 1Tim.i.17,—

'*the blessed and only Potentate*, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, *to whom be honour and power* everlasting! Amen.' 2Tim.vi.15,16.

In not a single instance does St Paul pay worship to Christ, either by ascriptions of praise or by offering of prayer. He offers all praise and prayer to God—to God in Three Persons, it may be, in certain places, and therefore including the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; but even this is not expressed; and he *does* name distinctly 'the Father,' 'God and the Father,' 'God our Father,' 'God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is a fact, about which you can satisfy yourselves, by ex-



amining your own Bibles,—by ‘searching the Scriptures,’ like the Bereans of old, ‘whether these things are so.’ He does indeed say in one place,—

‘*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,*’—referring here to the vision of the Lord Jesus, which appeared to him on the way to Damascus, as recorded in the Acts, and called him into the ministry. And he says in another place, with reference to the well-known ‘thorn in his flesh,’—

‘For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me,’ 2Cor.xii.8;

where again, although it is possible that, by the expression, ‘the Lord,’ he means Almighty God, as he does elsewhere, yet the context rather implies that he is speaking of Christ. But he is here also referring to ‘visions and revelations of the Lord,’ with which he had been favoured; he tells us how, ‘whether in the body, or out of the body, he cannot tell,’—

‘He had been caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter,’ 2C.xii.4; and in this state he appears to have had visions of the Lord Jesus, and to have besought him thrice, when he saw him thus present and appearing in a vision or visions, that the ‘thorn in the flesh,’—

‘the messenger of Satan, which had been sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations,’—

‘might depart from him.’ But there is no sign in either of these two instances of any *worship* paid by the great apostle to Christ,—not though he believed in the Divinity of Christ,—not though he speaks of him distinctly, as we heard last Sunday, as being now ‘highly exalted,’ as having—

‘a name given him which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.’

He would have ‘every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord’—‘*to the glory of God the Father.*’

So again, in the Acts, we find Stephen, ‘calling and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’—whereas in his last words, ‘Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!’ he is more probably addressing Almighty God. But, however this may be, here again Stephen had had a vision :—

'He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,' vii.55.

St Stephen, then, like St Paul, in remembrance of this vision, may here be addressing himself to Jesus visibly present to his mind's eye, as he would have done of old, if he had been with him upon earth. But in all other instances in the Acts, you will find that prayer is made directly to God. Thus the apostles, when they wished to fill up the place of Judas, prayed, probably by the mouth of St Peter, who had just spoken, i.24—

'Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen;'

and St Peter himself explains who this is,—'the Lord who knoweth the hearts,' and who orders the affairs of the Church,—where he says in another place, xv.8—

'Men and brethren, ye know how that, a good while ago, *God made choice among us*, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And *God, which knoweth the hearts*, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did to us.'

Again, we read, iv.24—

'They lifted up their voice to *God* with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.'

We read in the Acts of—

'praising *God*,' ii.47.iii.9, 'praying to *God*,' viii.22, 'praying to the Lord,' [that is, to *God*,] viii.23, 'making prayer unto *God*,' xii.5, 'singing praises to *God*,' xvi.25, 'giving thanks to *God*,' xxvii.35, 'thanking *God*,' xxviii.15.

Except in the case of Stephen there is not a single instance in the Acts, of worship, either by praise or prayer, being made unto Christ.

And, if we turn to the rest of the epistles, whether written or not by the apostles whose names they bear, we find the same phenomenon continually recurring.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read of—

'drawing nigh unto *God*,' vii.19, 'coming unto *God* by Christ,' vii.25, 'drawing near' by the High Priest over the House of God, x.22, 'coming unto *God*,' xi.6, 'offering the sacrifice of praise to *God* continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name,' xiii.15.

In the Epistle of James we read—

'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of *God*, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not,' i.5.

'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the *Father of Lights*,' i. 17.

'Therewith bless we *God, even the Father,*' iii.9.

'Draw nigh to *God,* and He will draw nigh unto you,' iv.8.

In the first of Peter we read—

'Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ!' i.3.

'If ye *call on the Father,* who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work,' i.17.

'That *God* in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ,' iv. 11.

'To *Him* be praise and dominion—to *Him* be glory and dominion—for ever and ever! Amen,' iv.2,v.11.

In the first of John we find—

'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards *God.* And whatever we ask, we receive of *Him,* because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight,' iii.22.

'And this is the confidence that we have in *Him,* [or, rather, towards *Him,*] that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and, if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of *Him,*' v.14,15.

Lastly, in St Jude we read an ascription of praise—

'Unto *Him* that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the *only Wise God* our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever! Amen,' v.24,25.

I do not examine the Book of the Revelations, because that is a book of ecstatic visions, which gives us no example of the common daily practice of Christians,—a book also, which (as I have before told you) was not recognized as canonical by the Churches of Syria, and by many of the great Church Fathers, as Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Jerusalem, and apparently Eusebius and Chrysostom. But throughout the rest of the New Testament, wherever we find the actual practice of living men, in no single instance is worship addressed in the form of *prayer* to Christ, and only once in the form of *praise*—namely at the end of the Second of Peter—

'But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.'

But this epistle is notoriously one of the most disputed in the whole New Testament: 'no trace of it can be found' down to the end of the second century (Westcott, p.395); its 'history is most obscure,' p.468; in the Alexandrian Church 'no one except Origen, as far as can be discovered now, was acquainted with it, and it is doubtful whether he made use of it,' p.415; among the Latin Fathers neither Tertullian, nor Cyprian, nor any of the earlier Latin writers,

even in the third century, show any signs of knowing it, p.421,422; Irenæus does not quote it, p.436; and in the Asiatic Churches the use of it is 'at least, very uncertain,' p.441. Eusebius, who died 340 A.D., ranks it, even in his age, among the disputed books; and it was expressly excluded from the Canon of the Council of Laodicea in the year 363 A.D.

In short, there can be little doubt that the second Epistle of St Peter is not a genuine writing of the apostle, but one of those numerous productions of the early time of Christianity, which were put forth—with pious motives, no doubt, very many of them, but with the greatest injury to the cause of truth—in the name of the Apostles, and even of Christ himself. Looking, therefore, at the universal language of the New Testament, and at the actual practice of the apostles both in the Acts and in their genuine epistles, it can scarcely be doubted that this solitary ascription of worship\* to Christ—'to him be glory both now and for ever!'—whereas our Lord himself teaches us to say to 'Our Father in Heaven'—

'For *Thine* is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever!'—

is a sign of *development*,—a sign that the Christian Church was already leaving the simplicity of Christ's own teaching and the example of the apostles, and, as Pliny tells us, in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan, at the end of the first century, was 'singing hymns to Christ as to God.'

We have had, however, abundant evidence before us to show that 'in the beginning it was not so,'—that Christ himself and his apostles have not sanctioned such prayers,—that they would have had us always 'say, when we pray, Our Father.' But gradually, this practice increased, more and more, of worshipping Jesus, instead of the Father, by singing hymns of prayer and praise to him. Ignatius, who died A.D. 107, is said to have been the first who introduced the custom of singing hymns in praise of the Holy Trinity

\* It need hardly be said that the expression in Matt.xxviii.9, 'And they came and held him by the feet and *worshipped* him,' means no more than that they *paid him reverence*, as the leper, viii.2, the ruler, ix.2, the mother of Zebedee's children, xx.20, did to Jesus; or as the wise men 'fell down and worshipped' the young child, ii.9, the servant 'fell down and worshipped' his lord, xviii.26, Cornelius 'fell down at Peter's feet, and worshipped him,' Acts x.25.

into the Church of Antioch. Clement of Alexandria, who died 218 A.D., is the first Father of the Eastern Church, in whose works any hymns are found: but those now used in the Greek Church were not introduced till the eighth and ninth centuries. The first, who wrote hymns for the Western Church, was Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who died A.D. 368; he was followed by Ambrose, A.D. 397. Most of those in the Roman breviary were composed some centuries later; and these are the Latin Hymns of which many are translated in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.' I need hardly say that the Church of Rome has gone far beyond the worship of Jesus to pay worship to the Virgin Mother and the Saints. But in 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' you will find many expressions, which, I believe, would have been utterly condemned by our Lord and his apostles,—expressions in which, not only is adoration paid to Jesus, instead of to 'our Father and his Father,' to 'our God and his God,' but the very '*thorns, and cross, and nails, and lance,*' the *wounds, the vinegar, the gall, the reed,* are called upon to *satisfy our spirits, to fill us with love, to plant in our souls the root of virtue, and mature its glorious fruit.* (See Hymn 96.) But indeed, the whole book overflows with words of prayer and praise, directly addressed to Jesus, such as find no example or warrant in the lessons of our Lord himself, nor in the language of his apostles.

It is quite another thing to offer our prayers to God *in the name of Jesus*. For this we have Scriptural direction and apostolic example, abundantly, and we have also the authority of the Liturgy of our own Church. It is true, indeed, that in some places of our Prayer-book, especially in the Litany, there are words of prayer addressed to Christ himself,—not, perhaps, in the first sentences of the Litany, where the three persons of the Divine Godhead are addressed separately, and then collectively, which amounts to a prayer addressed to Almighty God,—but in some of the following petitions, and in short ejaculations elsewhere. And there are *two* collects in which the same phenomenon occurs,—those for the third Sunday in Advent and for the first Sunday in Lent: that for St Stephen's Day is doubtful.\* But the *whole spirit* of the Prayer-book is against

\* Some would also name the prayer of St Chrysostom, supposing that in the words, 'and dost promise that, when two or three are gathered together in Thy

the practice. There are a *hundred and eighty* collects and prayers altogether; and of this whole number two only (or it may be three) have this peculiarity, to which may be added a third short form in the Service of the Visitation of the Sick. Even the collect for the third Sunday in Advent was substituted at the time of the Restoration of Charles II. for the older collect, which ran in this form:—

Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers, and by Thy gracious visitation lighten the darkness of our hearts by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I repeat, therefore, that the whole spirit of our Prayer-Book—as well as the teaching of our Lord and the practice of his apostles—is opposed to the practice which is rapidly growing in our day, and abounds in so many hymns both ‘Ancient’ and ‘Modern,’ of offering direct worship to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Scotch Church nothing of this kind appears in its authorized book of Psalms and Hymns for Public Worship. There are in that book 163 Psalms and 12 Hymns, together with 60 paraphrases of passages of Scripture. In the 163 Psalms, of course, the name of Christ or Jesus does not occur at all, nor does it in any of the 12 Hymns; though in some of these Hymns, as well as in many of the paraphrases, reference is made to our Lord, and to his saving work on our behalf, under some other designation, as there is in those words, which we have sung to-night out of our own Hymn-book:

‘Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,  
The ill that I this day have done.’

In 12 only of the 60 paraphrases does the name of Jesus or Christ occur, as it does in those passages of the New Testament, on which they are modelled, but *never as the object of worship*. The spirit of this Hymn-book, in short, like the spirit of our own Cathedral Hymn-book, is in full accordance with the spirit of the Psalms, which was the Psalter of the Church in the primitive age, when Paul and

Name, *Thou wilt grant their requests*,’ refer to the words of Christ recorded in Matt. xviii. 20. But those words are, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, *there am I in the midst of them*.’ Is not the promise referred to in this Collect, that made by ‘Almighty God’ *through* Christ, ‘it shall be done for them of *my Father* which is in Heaven,’ v. 19? comp. 1 Jo. iii. 22, v. 14. In short, the case here seems to be exactly the same as in the Baptismal Service when we say, ‘Receive him, O Lord, as *Thou hast* promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask and ye shall have,’ &c.

Silas in their prison sang praise unto God,—is in accordance with the spirit of the Church of England, with the example of the Apostles, with the teaching of Christ.\*

The more we adhere to that Scriptural model,—at least, in this *unauthorized* part of Public Worship,—the more shall we be likely to secure hymns, in which *all* the congregation can join, and to avoid the evil to which an able writer has justly referred when he says (Eden, *Theol. Dict.*, p.183) :

It is the opinion of some persons that hymns are often most injudiciously selected,—that others are offensive to good taste and tend to vulgarize the service,—but that many of them are exposed to a much more important censure, as putting forward, or as being a channel in which at any time *may* be put forward, doctrines in which *all* the members of our Church do not concur.

To one or other of these objections are exposed almost all the hymns which are commonly met with, in which the name of Christ or Jesus is used. They are either wanting in practical character ; or they are written in bad taste, using familiarly that name, ‘at which every knee should bow,’ and every heart do reverence ; or they are a channel for putting forward extreme doctrines, on either side, which are not accepted by *all* devout worshippers ; or they involve the direct worship of our Saviour, for which there is no sufficient warrant in the Bible. Again, there are many hymns suited for private use, which are not at all adapted for being sung by the whole congregation. Very many of the Hymns in ‘Hymns Ancient and Modern’ are of this character, which could not be sung by many in every congregation, and some of which ought not to be sung by any ; while out of these 273 compositions, *six* only, I believe, are versions of the Psalms. Our own Cathedral Hymn-book contains 90 Psalms and 60 Hymns, in which, it has been said, the name of Christ or Jesus does not appear. Of course, in the 90 Psalms it could not ; and in the 60 Hymns it does not, any more than it does in the Hymns of the Scotch Hymn-book to which I have just referred ; though refer-

\* The Prayer-book, prepared by the Rev. Dr Robert Lee, of the Scotch Church, for the use of his congregation at the Greyfriars’ Church in Edinburgh, contains six sets of Services for Morning and Evening Prayer, with occasional Services for Baptism, Holy Communion, Matrimony, Burial, &c., in not one of which is a single prayer addressed to any other than Almighty God or God the Father.

ence is made to the Person and Work of Christ, as in the Evening Hymn, and to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, in various places. When I meet with hymns of a proper character, in which that name occurs, I shall gladly adopt them.

Meanwhile, let us seek to pay due honour to him, whom we profess to call our Lord, by obeying his commands,—by following his direction and the example of his apostles,—coming daily by prayer to Him, who ‘seeth in secret and will reward openly,’—saying, when we pray, ‘Our Father which art in Heaven,’—

‘in everything by prayer and supplication making our requests known unto God,’—

unto Him who is our gracious God and Father, the ‘Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Only, O Lord, in thy dear Love,  
Fit us for perfect rest above;  
And help us, this and every day,  
To live more nearly as we pray!

## POSTSCRIPT TO A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE

LOWER HOUSE OF THE CONVOCATION OF THE PROVINCE  
OF CANTERBURY, JUNE 29, 1866.

BY

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DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

IN the foregoing remarks are expressed, however roughly, the general principles and facts which it seems to me might fairly be expected to guide most English Churchmen, of whatever views. I am even led to hope, from the tone of the ‘Statement’ which has in part occasioned their republication, that I may have attributed to the author of the ‘Judgment’ [the Bishop of Capetown], on which I was compelled thus freely to comment, a harsher and more destructive policy than he would be willing to



carry out. If so, I trust that there is yet a chance of a pacific settlement of this tedious and unprofitable controversy. It may perhaps still further conduce, in some degree, to such an issue, if I take this opportunity of dwelling on some other points not directly raised on the occasion of my speech.

I. I have endeavoured to show that the charges brought against the Bishop of Natal, in principle, apply equally to many other divines, dead and living; whom no one has attempted to deprive, if dead, of their authority; if living, of their position or their salaries. What I would here venture once more to urge is this, that if our object be not to crush a particular person, but to vindicate the truth of certain doctrines, our course should be exactly the opposite. It is true that in worldly politics, a powerful advantage is gained if we can select for our battle-field the cause of an unpopular or extravagant partisan. But such a course is hardly compatible with the regard due to the truth itself of the doctrines in question. If the disputed doctrines, together or severally, have been set forth by persons to whom no personal prejudice attaches, then it is obviously the highest duty, difficult as it may be to attain, carefully to avoid the entanglement of such doctrines with the unpopular party, and to discuss them as far as possible on the neutral or open ground of those who have maintained them, without attracting any general odium. This might easily be illustrated at length in the various cases already mentioned. But it may perhaps be well to take the extremest instance which has occurred in the present controversy, and which, owing to the circumstances of the case, was not included in the discussion respecting the Judgment of the Bishop of Capetown. I allude\* to the Hymn-book of Natal's Hymn-book, published by the Bishop of Natal, with the principles laid down in his accompanying sermon. I shall not be supposed to defend the proceeding itself. To accumulate controversy upon controversy in a community already sufficiently distracted, or to endeavour to fight out questions of abstract theology on the uncongenial field of poetical works, embodying sentiments of practical devotion, will probably appear to most persons in a high degree incongruous and inconvenient. But this ought not to affect the abstract doctrines or customs in dispute.

The allegation of the Bishop of Natal was in principle this, that the rule of Scripture, and the rule of the Church of England, is to address prayers and praises directly to the First Person in the Trinity, through, and not to, the Second.

\* In doing so, I may observe that the numerous allusions in the 'Statement' to this subject, are hardly relevant, inasmuch as the publication of the Hymn-book took place after the delivery of the Capetown Judgment, and after the alleged deposition of the Bishop of Natal.

That such is the general rule through the usual and the most solemn services, not only of the Church of England but of all Western Christendom, is undoubted. My attention was called many years ago by the kindness of a well-known High Church divine to a remark of Archdeacon Freeman \*, pointing out that this is in fact one of the main distinctions between the worship of the Eastern and the Western Churches. It is what one of the ablest of Bishop Colenso's critics on this very point justly calls 'the normal state of our devotions.' It is a fact, however explained, stated openly by Renaudot, Bishop Bull, and Waterland. It is an express decree of the third Council of Carthage, that 'prayer at the altar shall be always directed to the Father.' † It is stated by one of the most learned of modern Roman Catholics, that there is no direct invocation of Christ, in the works of any of the Fathers of the first, second, or third century. ‡ These various writers have, doubtless, each their own explanation to give of the fact, which they, thus, severally admit. The question of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the divinity of the Second Person in the Trinity, does not enter into the matter at all. That is acknowledged equally by the Bishop of Natal § and by the Western Church on the one side, and by the Eastern Church on the other. The particular exceptions, both in the Apostolic age and in the English Liturgy, are equally acknowledged by the Bishop of Natal and his opponents. Nor is it denied that these prayers form 'a feature of the devotional system of the Church of England, or of ancient, or of Western Christendom.' The question is simply what is the general usage—the prevailing feature—of the devotions of our own and of the Western Church, and whether that usage is founded on accident, or on some general and Scriptural principle. It may well be that the question had better not have been raised, or if raised, ought not to have been applied to a hymn-book. Dr Merivale's solution of

\* 'Principles of Divine Service,' i. 373.

† See the case fairly stated by Keble, 'Eucharistical Adoration,' p. 114. The decree of the Council of Carthage is also cited by Mr Liddon in his *Bampton Lectures* (p. 582) as expressing 'the more ancient law and instinct of the Church;' though he observes, and perhaps truly, that 'so strong was the impulse to offer prayer to Christ, that this Canon is strictly observed by no single liturgy,' and is especially broken in the Mozarabic rite.

‡ 'Home and Foreign Review,' iv. 659.

§ It may be observed that the Bishop's Hymn-book contains Heber's well-known hymn on the Trinity—

'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity.'

And also the Evening Hymn of Bishop Ken—

'Forgive, O Lord, for Thy dear Son,  
The ills that I this day have done;'

with the doxology at the end.

the difficulty may probably be the true one, that, whilst prayers to our Lord were discountenanced in the ancient Church, hymns were allowed; and it is well known that one of the most beautiful of modern hymns, 'Gracious Son of Mary, hear,' proceeds from the pen of one whose great name the Bishop of Natal would be the last to question. But even then the fact remains that the only hymns authoritatively annexed to the Prayer-book, and those authoritatively permitted by the Established Church of Scotland, are constructed on the same principle as those of the Bishop of Natal. On these, therefore, even if we restricted the investigation from forms of devotion generally to hymnology in particular, the question ought to be considered, rather than on the already encumbered field of the South African Church. I repeat, that I am not advocating any opinion in the matter. The Eastern Church may be more correct in its position than our own. Dean Milman's pathetic hymn may be the fittest exemplar of all our hymns. Bishop Colenso's mode of dealing with the matter may be dry, narrow, and misplaced. But neither in his case, nor in the parallel case of the English or Scottish Churches, need it infringe on the honour due to our blessed Lord; it may even have been suggested by a too scrupulous endeavour to follow literally His directions as to how we ought to pray.

It may be said, however, that in this, as in all the other cases cited, there is a difference discernible which still justifies us in putting the worst construction on the statement of the Bishop of Natal, or, at any rate, in drawing a distinction between him and those divines with whom he seems to agree. Such differences and distinctions, no doubt, can always be found by those who look for them. When Pascal in his 'Provincial Distinctions of Doctrine. Letters' was at a loss to discover the difference between Jansenists and the Jesuits on the doctrine on which they were both agreed, the Jesuit answers, 'The difference between us is so subtle, that we can hardly perceive it ourselves—you would find it difficult to understand. The Jansenists and the Jesuits both concur in the doctrine that 'Tous les justes ont toujours le pouvoir d'observer les Commandements.' But this is not enough. 'Ils ne vous disent pas que ce pouvoir est *prochain*, c'est là le point.' And then after endless endeavours to ascertain what is the *pouvoir prochain*, the baffled inquirer finds that it has no meaning, and serves no purpose, except as a distinction between the Jansenists and the Jesuits. 'Heureux,' he exclaims in righteous indignation, 'les peuples qui l'ignorent, heureux ceux qui ont précédé sa naissance.' The *pouvoir prochain*, under various forms, is still the resource of those who endeavour to

draw a line of demarcation on subjects where no such line can really be found.

And in creating such subtle distinctions, and reducing these questions from their abstract merits to their personal adoption by a particular individual, we further recall Pascal's account of the censure on the Jansenist Arnauld: 'Ce ne sont pas les sentiments de M. Arnauld qui sont hérétiques. Ce n'est que sa personne. Il n'est pas hérétique pour ce qu'il a dit ou écrit, mais surtout parce qu'il est M. Arnauld. Quoi qu'il fasse, s'il ne cesse d'être, il ne sera jamais bon catholique. La grace de S. Augustin ne sera jamais la véritable, tant qu'il la défend. Elle la deviendrait s'il venait à la combattre.'

It may indeed be urged that after all, it is not the doctrine but the person, the whole attitude and appearance of the man, that is disliked. And it is true that there are characters, <sup>Distinctions of Character.</sup> persons, positions, atmospheres,—far more dangerous, or far more sound, (as the case may be,) than any particular opinions. They cannot be brought before courts of law, civil or ecclesiastical. And yet we may justly entertain a dislike or suspicion, or admiration, as the case may be. But the question then ceases to relate to true or false doctrine, and becomes a question of the temper, motives, charity, pride, ambition, honesty, hypocrisy, self-denial, love of truth, kindness, in each particular character. It is obvious that no earthly tribunal whatever, whether Metropolitan, or Synodical, or Judicial, can take any cognizance of these matters. There is here no question of lawful or unlawful, orthodox or heretical opinions. If prelates or clergymen are to be deprived of their offices for being injudicious, or uncharitable, or presumptuous, or narrow-minded, censures, such as that which we are discussing, will take a much wider sweep.

In the case of the Bishop of Natal, most clergy will think that his style of criticism has been impetuous, his interest in it exaggerated, his mode of approaching such subjects, except for its frankness and moderation, dry and repulsive. 'It is true,' said one of the Parliamentary leaders in the trial of Strafford, 'we give law to hares and deer because they are beasts of chase, but it never was accounted cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head, as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey.' But it nevertheless remains a grave question for us, whether, even with all the suspicion and dislike which we may entertain towards the Bishop of Natal, we yet are called by the laws of Christian charity and prudence to treat him, not even as a beast of chase, but as a beast of prey.

When his work on the Pentateuch first appeared, it was shown to a wise man, who was by nature totally averse to rash speculation. He read it, and returned it with this remark, 'I am greatly shocked and startled. Nevertheless, my one hope and prayer for the rulers of the Church is, that they may treat it not as the attack of a deliberate enemy, but as the counsel of a mistaken friend.' This doubtless is what might have been done. This is what, many will grieve to think, was hardly done at all. Almost always it was assumed, though he himself vehemently protested against the imputation, that he was assailing Christianity or assailing the Pentateuch. Often, we may grieve yet more, even by some of the most charitable and enlightened of his critics, he was charged with calling the authors of the Sacred Books 'forgers and impostors,' though he himself repudiated the expression in every possible form. At a celebrated meeting of a venerable society, there seemed to be nothing which called forth such shouts of enthusiastic delight as the defamatory epithets which fell from the lips of the speakers on their brother prelate; as if nothing could be more welcome news than that a Bishop of the Church should be proved to be a dishonoured and dishonourable heretic.

These expressions were doubtless dictated in great part by a sincere zeal for what was believed to be the cause of orthodoxy. But the question will always remain, whether we are not bound, in justice, to judge the intentions of the person attacked from his own written and published works, rather than from the constructions which others may put upon them; and whether the exaggerations into which the person so assailed is driven, are not in part caused by those who assail him? The proverbial result of affixing a harsh or invidious name is equally true in all conditions of life, and it requires more firmness and faith than are to be found in common mortals, to resist the effect of an attitude of constant isolation, irritation, and self-assertion.

But there is yet more than this to be said. Let those who think the existence of the Bishop of Natal a mere scandal and offence, ask whether there is not something, even from their own point of view, which may serve as a compensation.

However much any one may question the prudence or the correctness of the book on the Pentateuch or on the Epistle to the Romans, no one will question the transparent sincerity of the author. It is this which has won for him, in spite of all his own short-comings, and all the obloquy which he has met, an amount of support and sympathy from the laity such as has very rarely fallen to the lot of an English Bishop. 'I would go twenty miles to hear Bishop Colenso preach,' was the remark

made by an artisan in the north to a missionary clergyman, 'he is so honest like.' The overflowing congregations of his own church in Natal (to which testimony is borne from the most diverse quarters) show how he is regarded by the bulk of the laity in South Africa. The fact that whilst only a small minority could be induced to assent to the election of a new bishop, an overwhelming majority enthusiastically protested against it, is of itself a proof of the hold he has obtained over his flock. The very complaints which have reached this country against those congregations, show their importance. 'Infidels, men who never entered a church before, working men in their shirt sleeves.' That this picture is extremely overcharged is now known from the indignant denial on the part of many members of the congregation itself. But even if there is any foundation in fact for those statements, it surely would be a cause for rejoicing rather than for lamenting. How gladly should we hail in London congregations of such men! How welcome would be the sight in our cathedrals of even twenty artisans in their working dress! Doubtless in the cathedral of Maritzburg they would hear much that we might lament, but as we learn from the Bishop's printed sermons, they would also hear, perhaps for the first time, of the love of God to man, of the death of Christ for sinners, of the Eternal Arms beneath us, of the better life above us. And even if out of the seventeen clergy of Natal not more than two or three have adhered to him, and of these one, as has been invidiously remarked, originally a mechanic, yet if it be true that he is the only one who speaks the language of the natives, his adhesion is not altogether unimportant for a missionary bishop, nor surely for a Christian teacher can it be altogether unworthy to have served at the trade of a carpenter.

But, even if there were no support among the clergy, and yet the Bishop were able to attract the laity of his flock, we may be pardoned for thinking, in the present crisis of Christendom, that any Church would incur a heavy responsibility that should cast off such a teacher from its ranks. No doubt a bishop, with a hostile clergy, is in a painful position. Yet we cannot forget that there has been in our own time and country a Prelate, one of the most learned and genial of his time, whom the great body of his clergy refused to meet at his first entrance into his diocese. He died, it is true, of a broken heart, too soon to regain the affections of his clergy, but not too soon to leave behind him a fragrant remembrance, which lives to this day in all who ever knew or heard of Bishop Lloyd of Oxford. The cases of more than one prelate, too, might be named, who entered on their work with an opposition from their clergy no less decisive,

but who lived, happily, long enough to descend into their graves amidst a universal lamentation. Such examples reveal to us that the temporary alienation of the clergy from their bishop is not of itself a convincing proof that he will never win their confidence. It is for the Bishop of Natal himself to prove by consistent toleration and forbearance, by devotion to the pastoral work and missionary enterprise of his diocese, that he has within him the making of a Christian Bishop, as well as of a fearless and industrious scholar.

And if for a moment we may take a wider view, let us look not only at our own country, but at the greatest Church of the West, the Church of Rome. There is no other single cause of its weakness, so much lamented by its own more enlightened members, as the difficulty which its clergy find in expressing their real convictions. It is in the contrast which in this respect is presented by the Church of England, that lies its peculiar strength. The Bishop of Natal gives us more than he can ever take from us, by the testimony which is thus rendered to all the world that the power of thought and speech is still left to us, even in the highest ranks of our hierarchy. This is worth a hundred mistakes that he may have made about the author of the *Pentateuch*. Had Richard Simon been allowed free scope in France, who can say how many weapons would have been snatched from the hands of Voltaire? Were Döllinger allowed free scope in Germany, and the Benedictine communities in Italy, who can say what prospects might not yet be in store for the struggling Papacy? A famous French writer, in a striking passage, contrasts the outspoken expressions of the *bon évêque* Colenso (as he compassionately calls him) with what he designates 'the angelic silence' of many of the priesthood of his own country, who devour their doubts, and stifle their intellectual convictions in secret. Such silence may be necessary in the Church of France and of Italy; it may become necessary for us, but may we long be preserved from it, for it is the silence of death.

It is not, then, with the view of promoting the particular conclusions of the Bishop of Natal, that Churchmen are invited to pause before they take any further step for restricting or condemning them. It is because we are in a period of transition, in which the highest duty of Faith as well as of Charity calls upon us 'to wait.' That the extremest lengths of opinion in the opposite direction, even to the very verge of Rome, shall have free play within our pale, seems, happily, now to be admitted by all who take a calm view of the best interests of the National Church. All that is asked is, that the large liberty which is thus claimed and granted on one side should be as freely granted on another.

This and similar reflections may, it is hoped, compensate to many excellent persons for any disappointment which they may naturally experience in the absence of premature decisions.

The doctrines, as we have seen, of the Bishop of Natal are such as the Universal Church has never condemned; such as within the Church of England are by law allowed. It may be that in the Church of Rome, the liberty of speculation which was formerly, and is still in theory, permitted within these same limits, is now become practically impossible, and that to those of its communion, who once might have freely expressed their thoughts on these subjects, silence is now the only course. But for the Church of England, still so closely allied with all that is bravest and freest in the heart of the English nation, we may still surely cherish better hopes: 'Its true voice in this matter,' I quote words far better than my own, 'is such as becomes a Church which never was infallible and is now reformed. It is a voice humble and persuasive towards its members, duly respecting their liberty of judgment, not provoking them to wrath when they go amiss, but reaching their hearts as the voice of one affectionately desirous of them, on whatever side they may contend. There is no country where the Bible may be more safely committed to free investigation than to ours, because there is none in which it rests more firmly on the faith and affection of the people; none where the clergy may more boldly probe its nature and test its grounds, because in none will it appear more inspired as we go deeper into its substance. Nor will the Church of England be relinquishing what the Coronation Service truly calls "the most valuable thing which the world contains," even though its judges should acquit the Bishop of Natal, and its bishops reinvite him to their conclave.'



## XIV.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY IN DEATH.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 15, 1866.

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1 COR. XV. 57.

'BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHICH GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.'

THAT which forms our chief, permanent ground for believing or looking for immortality, is our moral and spiritual nature,—that nature by which we feel we are truly brethren of Christ and children of God. Our Lord himself, indeed, has 'brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.' By many of his gracious sayings he has quickened within us the hope of a life beyond the grave, and deepened and confirmed that hope in those in whose hearts it already existed. In the apostolic writings also,—especially in those of St Paul, and above all in the chapter from which the text is taken,—strong arguments are used to prove the certainty of another life, or exhortations are used on the strength of those arguments :—

'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

There are some, perhaps, for whom such authority as this is sufficient to silence every doubt and questioning. There are some, who may have never doubted at all, who receive implicitly the teaching of the Church in which they have been trained, without troubling themselves with any further questionings as to the grounds of their hope. But there are others—many others—whose minds are differently constituted,—who feel compelled, by a sacred impulse from within, to use the reasoning powers, with which their God has blessed them, upon the highest things,

the things of religion, as well as the things of common life,—who cannot believe merely because ‘it is written,’—who cannot, if they would, abstain from carrying out the Apostle’s injunction to ‘prove all things,’ and so ‘hold fast that which is good.’

To such as these, while harassed by doubts about the question of another life, it is a comfort to fall back upon the thought, that the sure proof of it lies in the fact of their own present existence, as beings endowed with a moral and spiritual nature,—with a conscience of right and wrong, with a sense of spiritual truth and beauty,—which here in this world enjoys only faint glimpses of the eternal excellences, which are its proper portion and inheritance, for which it is specially adapted, and whose divine longings after truth, and desires after perfection, can never here be satisfied. It is true, we cannot conceive what that life beyond the grave shall be. When the shades of death close over us, it may seem as if life with all its active powers—its brightness and glory—were over,—as if we were limited to our three-score years and ten, and to the passing concerns of this present world. But you may have heard how one dear brother of our race, who rests now in the bosom of God, has written with wonderful force (Blanco White):—

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew  
Thee from report divine, and knew thy name,  
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
This glorious canopy of light and blue?  
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,  
And lo! Creation widened in man's view.  
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,  
Whilst flower, and leaf, and insect, stood revealed,  
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!  
Why should we then shun death with anxious strife?  
If *light* can thus deceive, wherefore not *life*?

But that same consciousness, which we feel, of a calling far beyond and above mere enjoyment, of occupying a sphere which extends far beyond self, beyond self in its most expanded form, is the same which makes the question of a hereafter fraught with anxiety, with fear as well as hope. As for the *seeming* terrors of the last moment,

those physical terrors which belong to this side of it, experienced and philosophic physicians assure us that, as far as it is possible to judge, they are seeming only, that to die is to cease to suffer. And it is well that all—especially the weakly and timid—should be aware of this. To die is not generally—not often—to ‘agonize,’ as it is called in a kindred tongue. The New Testament phrase, ‘to fall asleep,’ expresses the act more correctly. The death-bed has been surrounded with more terrors than really belong to it,—partly through the tendency of the fancy to fill the darkness with alien forms, since, where we see nothing, we are prone to create a host of beings, dreadful because unknown, to people the shade,—but chiefly because conscience has joined with fancy to suggest that we are not fit for the world where all is true and real, naked and bared to view, because we shrink from the exposure of our very selves, which death seems to imply. *Here*, how many coverings wrap us round ! Our place in society, our character with our friends and associates, the regards which are due to us from our dependants, from those whom we have benefited, the tenderness, perhaps the reverence, of those who know us best and yet love us,—all these and many other things, which prevent our fellow-men from seeing us as we really are, we feel to be among the passing shows of this life, and we dread the moment when the ‘softening veil’ shall be withdrawn, which hides us from the eyes of others and even from our own,—when we shall no longer be able to glass ourselves in the eyes of those others, but like Adam in the garden shall ‘know that we are naked.’ Nay, when we think at times even in this life of those whom we have loved and honoured, and who have now been taken from us to their rest, and try, as it were, to hold communion with them, who has not had that feeling which our great living poet expresses so truly ?—

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?  
Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame,  
And I be lessened in his love ?

Oh, if a pure and perfect mirror gave back to us a pure and

perfect image of ourselves, of our hearts and lives, how would our thoughts press forward to the moment when the veil shall be lifted up, when the door shall be opened, and the light of eternity stream in upon us !

This, then, *the sense of sin*, is 'the sting of death.' Terrors surround it often, and fears of the unknown, because it is unknown, unimagined, and unimaginable. But the sting, the sharpness, the bitterness, of them all is the consciousness of sin,—not of casual faults, of single transgressions merely,—but of something false within, something which falls short in us of our own standard, of what we confess to ourselves to be our imperative duty,—a 'coming short,' as the Apostle calls it, 'of the glory of God,' of our glorious calling as the children of God, 'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.' In nature, all things that fail of their natural perfection, of the intention of their creation, live out their time, and then perish utterly. The unfruitful tree, the barren flower, forfeit that immortality which is proper to them, namely, to live in continuation of their species. And is personal immortality an unalienable inheritance of the fallen, depraved will,—of the will which has subjected itself to lower powers, which has become the slave of 'the world, the flesh, and the devil' ? Not without meaning, surely, not for naught, has death been wrapt in darkness and fear. The Giver of life has ordained it so. Death cuts short our course ; it stands at the end of the path, which, as we will it, is a path of drawing near to God or a path of departure from Him. It is the night-fall : and who can walk or work in the night ? If we did not feel that the day-time, which God gives us to work in, is short,—at least, that it is limited,—who would begin to work at all, or *when* should we begin ?

Truly, we may well shrink from sitting in the seat of the Great Judge of all, conscious as we are of our weakness, of the limitations of our faculties, knowing how small a circle is our mind's horizon, to how minute a sphere our eyesight is confined—a sphere !—an atom, rather, in the universe of God. Still, our faith in the truthfulness of our Creator compels us to maintain that the same laws, of which we are conscious in this our little sphere, are the laws of that vast universe ; and we refuse to ascribe to

Him anything inconsistent with Justice and Mercy, Faithfulness and Lovingkindness, such as we know them in ourselves and others. Hence it is that the old notion of the almost universal perdition of the human race,—rather, of the everlasting torments in hellfire of all but the inner circle of the Christian Church, whether described as baptized or as believers,—falls out of our creed, as inconsistent with the free light of Gospel day, the ‘light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’—yea, as blasphemy against the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. Hence it is also that we cling to the Scripture account of what God’s judgment will be,—of what it is,—namely, ‘to every man according to his works,’—so that not a correct belief, but a pure heart and life, is the essential to salvation. How else, indeed, would a pure love of truth be possible? How else could we hold the balance of the judgment even, and, according to the apostolic precept, before quoted, ‘prove all things and hold fast that which is good,’ if in the scale which holds the *affirmation* of belief the enormous weight were thrown of a self-interest extending into a never-ending future? How often have we heard the argument used, ‘It is *safer* to believe too much than too little’! And yet how utterly unworthy is such an argument of men, of Christians! How alien to that ‘free spirit,’ that princely spirit, for which the Psalmist prayed of old,—  
 ‘Uphold me with Thy free Spirit!’—‘Let Thy free Spirit lead me into the land of Uprightness’!

No! the true sting of death is sin,—not the possibility of error concerning divine things, which death itself, if God so wills it, may at once remove. On the other hand, while a trust in God’s Justice and Mercy, which are but two aspects of the same Goodness, ought to calm our minds in the face of death, whether we are contemplating it with reference to ourselves alone or to the whole race of man,—and while respecting others we are forbidden—oh, how wisely forbidden!—to judge,—it is clearly our duty to judge *ourselves*. What talents our fellow-servants may have received, we cannot tell. But surely we ought to know what have been committed to ourselves. For those we shall have to give account: our Master says so in the Gospel: the Divine Spirit says so in our hearts. For each of us the hour of death is the time, when the judgment

will be set and the books opened, for the deeds done in this life, and the duties left undone. Whatever new day may dawn for us beyond the grave, *this day* of mortal life—our time in this well-known, familiar, not unbeloved, earth—will be over. Our last opportunity of serving God amongst these our friends, our neighbours, our dear home-circle, will have passed away. But with what perfect security may those meet the coming of that hour, and improve that last opportunity, to whom it is but the completion of a golden chain of very many others well-improved? What sting would there be to them in the thought 'the last'?

But 'the strength of sin is the law.' If we had been made to live in solitude, and our Creator had bestowed a separate globe upon each of us, the conscience of each would have been his only law. But, as we are members of a great family, whose archives stretch back beyond history, and who, though scattered abroad over the earth, yet are all more or less in communion with others, and mutually dependent one upon another,—to whom Society is indeed our only world, and the relations in which we stand to others the necessary conditions of our higher life,—the human conscience, essentially the same from the beginning, has formed a code of outward laws, whose characteristic is, not to *command*, but to *forbid*. In other words, the same Divine Spirit, which says to each of us, 'Do not this abominable thing which I hate,' has spoken so distinctly to prophets and lawgivers of old, that 'the word of the Lord has been as a burning fire shut up in their bones, so that they could not stay.' They spoke, and all who heard could not evade the message. It bore its own credentials with it. It was God's Will, His Law: the guilty trembled, the faithful embraced it with devout awe, and laid it up in their heart of hearts. What seems to us now trite, familiar, obvious, was a flash of inspiration—a revelation—to those who first thought it, who first put it into audible words.

In the childhood of the world, the imagination raised the throne of the Divine Lawgiver on lofty mountains, and surrounded it with all the most awful pomps of nature. But these added nothing to the real authority of His words, those words spoken in secret to the heart and conscience of man, which, by whatever human lips reported,

are the words of One, whom every conscious human being, that is not embruted by ignorance and depravity, recognizes as his rightful Lord. Many, too, there are, who feel the power of such words, when they hear them from their fellow-men; though the light of their own consciences may be perhaps too faint a gleam, their spiritual powers too feeble, to enable them to find the path of duty without such help. Even as children take their parents' word for their law, so the mass of men are under tutors and governors, until the time appointed by their Father. With children, indeed, we should think the training very defective, which did not lead on through obedience to insight. But an obedient child, on a point where its parent has not spoken clearly, may be in perplexity, or at least in some uncertainty, how to act. And then an elder friend appearing, with a message from the parent, is hailed as the parent himself. Nay, the child may know what the parent is likely to say, may seem to recollect that he has so spoken; but how comforting and reassuring, to hear that he has spoken the same thing to others! Or, in the case of the disobedient and rebellious, how much easier is it to bring the law to bear upon the conscience, when it has become outward, expressed in words universally accepted as true, become a recognized principle of life and action! Those, who have lived some time in this world of trial and temptation, who know something of the winding ways of their own hearts, will recognize at once the value of the outward Law,—the expression, in actual words, from the experience of other men, of the very same convictions, which they themselves have felt brought home, as Eternal Truth, within them. To have broken it manifestly, to feel that they have broken it, may be even the means of waking the sleeping conscience. In the consciousness of hearing its condemning voice, is the very strength of remorse; from its grasp there is no escape;—

'The sting of death is sin, but the strength of sin is the Law.'

How, then, with our own hearts condemning us, and the voice of God's holy Law giving strength and authority to that condemnation, can we look calmly on that from which nature revolts, and say,—

'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?'  
'Thanks be to God!' says the Apostle: we must take

refuge from the condemning law in the very presence, on the footsteps of the throne, of the Lawgiver. 'Who giveth us the victory!' There is a struggle, then, a fight, though the moment of dissolution is not the time for it. The spirit of disobedience, which the Law pursues with its penalties, must be encountered and cast out by the true filial spirit, which says, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' 'Through our Lord Jesus Christ': this was the victory won by the Captain of our salvation, as he showed when he said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit'; and the feeblest Christian may partake of that victory. By faith in Christ Jesus we are all the children of God; and what is it to have faith in Jesus, if it be a real human act, and not a mere mystical, magical figment, but to take his words for truth, and to follow his example?

All the terrors of death, as well as all the sorrows of life, are a Father's warning and a Father's rod, to thwart us in that downward course which we are ever so ready to take. Well may our hearts shrink at the thought of being brought into His nearer Presence, into a more vivid consciousness that the All-seeing Eye is gazing on us, with all our stains upon us, all our deformities. Our only refuge is the faith that through—underneath—those stains and deformities that same All-seeing Eye can yet discern the traces of the child of God, not altogether effaced,—that our Father's Almighty Mercy and Wisdom will see it good to chasten and correct, if need be, but not to give over unto death.

Some, perhaps, will say, 'The pure and holy, the Divine Jesus, knew himself to be the Son of God, though all outward succour was withdrawn. But how can *we* know that any filial relation subsists between such sinners as we are and the Almighty Father?' Yet 'thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!' It is he—the pure and holy one, speaking the words, doing the works, of God, in whom the Father was dwelling, who came to manifest the Father to us,—it is he who has taught us all to say 'Our Father,'—all the sons of men, the sinful and sin-oppressed, as well as the faithful and true-hearted, those who have 'trespasses' to be 'forgiven,' 'temptations' by which they are harassed, 'evil' from which they long to be 'delivered': it is he



who said to that guilty woman, 'Go and sin no more'; it is he who said to the penitent thief, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' Whatever other doctrines may be found in the New Testament, this of the Fatherhood of God to all, even to the prodigal, is at least *the* doctrine which Jesus taught,—the truth by which he himself conquered death,—the only truth which can overcome the fear of death in any, which can overcome the terror, which can dissipate the despair. This 'victory' is not that of those, who from mere animal courage, excitement, or even ignorance, may meet death boldly, and without flinching, but also without thought, and without hope. It is not gained by mocking, as it were, at death, as if death were a trifling matter. But it is gained by those who have learned to make light of death, as St Paul did, who regarded it as a passage out of this state of being, in which we 'see through a glass darkly,' into another where we shall 'see face to face,' and 'know' our God 'even as we are known.' It is gained if we are able to regard both life and death as most awful, yet most blessed, things,—'life,' as 'the time to serve the Lord,' to travel on through sun or shade, with a faith in the constant Presence of an Unseen Guardian, Father, and Friend,—death, as the step by which we pass into His more immediate Presence. We may not, indeed, pass from hence at once into the full radiance of that glorious light. The analogy of this world, as well as the teaching of Scripture, seems rather to imply that death is a resting-time, a sleep, and that a day of future glory shall be revealed. It matters not to us whether we sleep or wake; we shall still be with the Lord. It may be that we shall say 'good night' to one another, and retire to rest, perhaps at early eve, perhaps at midnight, and only on waking on the glorious morn, shall put on our new apparel. It may be that we shall not go to rest at all, but, having watched all night, shall rise up at once as 'that day' breaks upon us in the hour of death, and be clothed upon, and mortality will be swallowed up at once in life.

## XV.

### THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 15, 1866.

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NUM. XXIII. 10.

'LET ME DIE THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS, AND LET MY LAST END BE LIKE HIS.'

It need hardly be said that there is much in this story of Balaam, which is brought before us in the Lessons of to-day and in that of last Sunday Evening, which stamps the whole narrative as unhistorical. The account of the ass speaking with human voice—in excellent Hebrew—has always been a great stumbling-block to many devout persons, brought up to believe that every word of Scripture must be regarded as infallibly true: and it has perplexed many even of the most orthodox commentators. Not only does the ass speak, while falling under Balaam, but it *reasons* with the prophet, and the prophet answers without expressing the slightest astonishment at so astounding an occurrence. We are told that—

She said unto Balaam, 'What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?' And Balaam said unto the ass, 'Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee.' And the ass said unto Balaam, 'Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was ever I wont to do so unto thee?' And he said, 'Nay.'

Accordingly one orthodox Divine (Tholuck) writes:—

What rider would sit quiet, if his beast should really utter such a complaint, and would not leap off and cry for help, rather than stop to give an intelligent answer?

Another says (Hengstenberg):—

The speaking of the ass, when transferred into the presence of *external reality*, appears to disturb the eternal laws which are laid down in

Gen. i., and which establish the boundary between the human and the brute creation.

And he, too, adds :—

The advocates of the external view have always been greatly perplexed by the fact, that Balaam expressed no astonishment at the circumstance of an ass speaking.

Accordingly both these eminent writers explain the whole occurrence as something *internal*—something which passed in Balaam's own mind. As a third has written (Kurtz) :—

Nearly all the modern believing theologians have endeavoured to remove the difficulties connected with the fact, that the ass should be said to have spoken, by explaining the whole affair as something merely inward,—a vision, in fact, and not an external objective occurrence. The ass, they say, did not really speak : but Balaam was thrown into a state of ecstasy by the operation of God ; and in this state the same impression was produced upon his mind, as if the words had really been spoken by the ass herself.

This last writer, however, opposes strenuously this view, and says, with reference to the language attributed to the ass :—

Are these the words of God ? Are they not much rather the simple utterances of the feelings of an ill-used animal, complaints of unmerited chastisement and ill-treatment, such as every domestic animal is constantly uttering, in similar situations, if not in the words of human speech, yet by perfectly intelligible signs ?

Accordingly, he maintains that the ass merely 'gave utterance to its emotions, to its terror and pain, and to the feelings of injustice, both by its actions and voice,' in the usual manner, but that—

such modulations were given to the *voice*, that they *fell upon Balaam's ears as words of human speech*, and this was the result of an immediate interposition on the part of God—in other words, it was a miracle.

In this way the plain meaning of the Scripture story is explained away by excellent men, determined to maintain in some form or other the dogma of Scriptural Infallibility, yet feeling their reason staggered with the statement as it lies before them, if understood in its literal sense. Happily, however, besides this, the narrative contains other convincing signs that it is an artistic composition of a later age—an attempt to reproduce an imaginary scene by some devout poet of a later time—and not a record of actual historical fact. For we find that throughout these chapters both Balak the King of Moab, and Balaam the Assyrian prophet, who had been summoned from the banks of the Euphrates to come and curse Israel, make use familiarly

of the name Jehovah, which we are told, had been first revealed to Moses in Egypt at the beginning of the Exodus, and by him for the first time communicated to Israel. If it be said that, during the passage of Israel through the wilderness, some knowledge of this name might have reached the ears of Balak and Balaam, yet this would not account for the heathen king and heathen prophet employing it, just exactly as the Israelites themselves might have done, as the name of God. Thus Balaam says to Balak's messengers :—

'Lodge ye here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Jehovah shall speak unto me.'

'Get you into your land, for Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you.'

'Tarry you also here this night, that I may know what Jehovah will say unto me more.'

And he says to Balak himself :—

'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of mine own mind ; but what Jehovah saith, that will I speak.'

Nay, he actually says in one place—

'I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah *my* God, to do less or more.'

But what will probably be felt to be most decisive is this, that the whole of Balaam's prophecies are given in pure Hebrew. He, an Assyrian prophet, addressing Balak, the King of Moab, with 'the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian,' delivers himself in a strain of magnificent poetry, but all in excellent Hebrew, without the slightest sign of an admixture of foreign idioms. Supposing even that the Midianites and Moabites spoke languages akin to one another, and to that of the Hebrews,—which is very possible and even probable,—supposing also that Balaam, coming from Pethor in Mesopotamia, 'by the river of the land of the children of his people,' spoke also a kindred dialect,—yet neither Balak nor Balaam would have spoken pure Hebrew ; in the addresses of the latter we should certainly expect to find some strong indications of a difference of dialects ; and, in fact, it is certain that the language of Aram or Mesopotamia, though akin to that of Canaan, differed very materially from it (see G.xxxi.47).

But in any case the question would still remain,—How did Moses become possessed of a copy of these prophecies, in whatever language they may have been delivered, since

they were not spoken in his hearing or in the hearing of any of the Israelites, but in the ears of the Moabites and Midianites, his enemies—and were spoken, too, not by premeditation, so as to have been written down beforehand, but, as we are plainly told, under the influence of the moment, and in direct opposition to the wishes both of the king and of the prophet himself?

There can be no doubt, then, that we have here a grand poem, composed in a later day,—perhaps in the age of David, to which most of the references in the last chapter seem distinctly to refer. We have there mention made of Agag, the king of Amalek, whom Samuel put to death in Saul's time, shortly before the time of David; and we have David himself referred to in the full stream of his conquests, when perhaps he had already gained some great victories over Edom and Moab, and his final triumph over these countries could be confidently predicted. For the poet makes the Assyrian Prophet take his stand, as it were, in the far-back Mosaic time, and say:—

'I shall see him, but not now;  
I shall behold him, but not near;  
There shall come a star out of Jacob,  
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,  
And shall smite the corners of Moab,  
And destroy all the children of Sheth.  
And Edom shall be a possession,  
Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies;  
And Israel shall do valiantly.'

Of course, it is true that the writer has thrown himself as far as possible into the circumstances of the older time which he wished to describe—as any great poet would do, in taking for his subject some long-past event. Dean Stanley's beautiful description, therefore, of the Seer looking down upon the hosts of Israel is perfectly correct and just—is exactly what the Hebrew poet pictured to his own mind, and intended to set before the mind's eye of others.

From the 'high places' there dedicated to Baal, from the 'bare hill' on 'the top of the rocks,' and lastly from the cultivated 'field' of Zophim, on 'the top of Pisgah,' 'from the top of Peor, that looketh on the face of the waste,' the Assyrian Prophet, with the King of Moab by his side, looked over the wide prospect:—

'He watched, till morning's ray  
On lake and meadow lay,  
And willow-shaded streams that silent sweep

Amid their bannered lines,  
Where, by their several signs,  
The desert-wearied tribes in sight of Canaan sleep.'

He saw in that vast encampment, among the Acacia-groves, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!' Like the watercourses of the mountains, like gardens by the side of his own great river Euphrates, with their aromatic shrubs and their wide-spreading cedars—the lines of the camp were spread out before him. Ephraim was there with 'the strength of the wild bull of the north,'—Judah, 'couching like the lion' of the south,—'a people dwelling alone, yet a mighty nation,—' Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?' He looked round from his high post over the table-lands of Moab, to the line of mountains stretching away to Edom on the south—over the high platform of the Desert beyond the Dead Sea, where dwelt the tribe of Amalek, then 'first of the nations,'—over the Kenite, not yet removed from his clefts in the rocks of Engedi, full in front of the Prophet's view. And for each his dirge of lamentation went up; till at the thought of his own distant land of 'Asshur,' of the land beyond the Euphrates, of the dim vision of ships coming from the Western Sea, which lay behind the hills of Palestine, 'to afflict Asshur and to afflict Eber,'—he burst into the bitter cry, 'Alas! who shall live when God doeth this!' and he rose up and returned to his place.—*Sinai and Palestine*, p.299.

All this is an exquisite description of the scene, which the Hebrew writer imagined to be spread out before the Prophet's view, but it does not therefore prove the story itself to be historically true—any more than a vivid realization, by some great modern poet or prose writer, of the scene and circumstances which he wished to describe, would be any evidence that the story which he was telling was a real history, or that *he meant his readers to regard it as such*.

And this is the answer to be made at once to the grave charge, which is often made against those who desire to look at the Scripture narratives just exactly as they are, that to speak of such a narrative as this as a work of the poetical imagination is to brand it as an imposture and forgery. Doubtless it would be so if the original writer meant it to be understood that he was giving it to the world as a piece of real history. But no one thinks of calling the great works of imagination of our own days 'impostures' or 'forgeries,' because the writer delivers the lessons which he wishes to teach in the form of a fiction. No one calls the writer of the Book of Job a forger, because he introduces Satan discoursing with the Almighty in the courts of heaven—and even using taunting language—but all in excellent

Hebrew. Nor is there the slightest excuse for applying such a designation to the writer of these chapters of the Book of Numbers, supposing them to be, as I have said, an imaginary composition, with what basis of real fact it is impossible to say—unless we set out with the unwarrantable assumption that he meant his work to be taken as a record of real fact,—nay, a record divinely and infallibly true. Why may not a work of Imagination, or rather the writer of it, be inspired, and God, our Divine Teacher, convey thus, by means of our brother man, a message of life to our souls as well as by other agencies?

For what, let us ask ourselves, is the Imagination of man? Is it not that marvellous faculty, possessed by the human being, of setting before the mind's eye, in distinct visible form—I mean, mentally visible—an image of what is real and true, and making it sensibly present to the thoughts? And can that faculty be more nobly employed than when thus dealing with eternal realities, seeking to clothe them in forms by which the human mind may more distinctly grasp them, and become thus more easily possessed of the underlying truth? Our Lord, we know, constantly made use of this faculty, when he addressed his disciples or the multitude, not in plain discourse, but in parables. The Book of Job again, as I have said, is a very strong instance in point, since no intelligent reader, I suppose, believes in this day that the Book of Job is real history—that either Satan or Jehovah reasoned together, or that the Almighty answered Job 'out of the whirlwind' in four noble chapters of Hebrew poetry. And here, too, in this history of Balaam we have undoubtedly another similar instance. And, in truth, is not *all* history more or less a matter of the Imagination? How little do we really know for *certain* of the facts of the age in which even we live? What very different accounts would different persons give of the same transaction, in which they both took part,—because each looks at it from his own point of view, sees but a portion of it, and sees that through the coloured medium of his own mind! An historian, therefore, however much he may wish to be accurate, cannot possibly be absolutely so. He can only do his duty faithfully by gathering together reports from different persons of different opinions and principles, comparing and combining them

according to the best of his judgment, and filling up the blanks out of his own Imagination. As one has written (Archd. Hare, *Guesses at Truth*, p.337)—

It has been a matter of argument whether poetry or history is the truer. . . . Very few histories tell us what has really happened. They tell us what somebody or other once *conceived* to have happened, somebody liable to all the infirmities, physical, intellectual, and moral, by which man's judgment is distorted. Even this seldom comes to us except at third or fourth, or, it may be, at twentieth hand. . . . There is not half the falsehood in the world that the falsehearted fancy, much as there may be, and greatly as the quantity is increased by suspicion. . . . Three-fourths of the misstatements and misrepresentations that we hear have a different origin. In a number—perhaps, a majority—of instances, the feelings of the relator give a tinge to what he sees. Manifold discrepancies will arise from differences in the perceptive powers of the organs by which the object was observed, whether those differences be natural, or result from cultivation or from peculiar habits of thought. Very often people cannot help seeing diversely, because they are not looking from the same point of view. The self-same action may to one man's eyes appear patient and beneficent, to another man's crafty and selfish. Nay, the same man may often find his view of it alter, as he beholds it in a fainter or fuller light, displaying less or more of its motives and character.

The historian, in short, cannot choose his characters. He must take them as they appear on the foreground of the age which he describes: he must gather from all quarters such facts as he can about them, often very defective or strangely contradictory. And then he must try to imagine to himself such a character as fits in best with these facts. It is obvious that the view which even the best writer of history will present to us is liable to be exceedingly distorted, and very far indeed from being an accurate and true representation. Whereas the great poet chooses for himself the character whose actions he intends to describe. He can remain true to his own ideal; he can set before us something, which has certainly a real and true existence for his own mind, and, as he is but a brother of our race, is true also for ours. And, as the same eminent Divine has said, p.347—

The true knowledge to be learned, whether from poetry or from history,—the knowledge of real importance to man for the study of his own nature,—the knowledge which may give him an insight into the sources of his weakness and his strength, and which may teach him how to act upon himself and upon others,—is the knowledge of the principles and passions by which men in various ages have been agitated and swayed, and by which events have been brought about, or by which they might have been brought about, if they have not.



Thus we shall find real instruction—Divine lessons of truth—in the story of the Exodus generally, and in this portion of it in particular—though we may feel compelled, by the force of evidence, to regard it as a work of the Imagination, and not an historical record of actual fact. We shall have then not details of events, imperfectly reported to us, but living thoughts which really did pass through the minds of the writers, our fellowmen who lived 3000 years ago, and show us how the same Divine Spirit, who is now teaching us, was then teaching them—was helping them, in that early age, to ‘feel after God and find Him.’ Doubtless, many passages of this grand poem, which we have had brought before us to-day as embodying the utterances of the Assyrian Seer, would furnish us with interesting subjects for closer consideration,—not only as giving us information, of the most trustworthy and valuable kind, with reference to the age in which the writer lived, its ‘manners, arts, institutions, habits’—but also as revealing to us ‘its feelings, its spirit, and its faith,’—as helping to exhibit to us more plainly the steps by which the Great Father of spirits has led on the human race into the clearer, fuller, knowledge of Himself. But I have selected one passage of this kind—a very well-known text—on which I will make a few remarks this evening.

‘ Let me die the death of the righteous,  
And let my last end be like his.’

The context shows that ‘the righteous,’ contemplated by the Prophet, were ‘the righteous people,’ as they called themselves, ‘Jeshurun,’ the chosen nation :—

‘ Who can count the dust of Jacob,  
And the number of the fourth part of Israel ?  
Let me die the death of the righteous,  
And let my last end be like his ! ’

They were, indeed, a chosen people—highly favoured of God to receive the revelations of His Spirit, and called to be ‘Jehovah’s Servant,’ for ministering the knowledge of His Love and Truth to all the world. But even in the mind of the writer of this story they must have been distinguished rather by the possession of a purer faith in their midst, a greater knowledge—at least in some higher minds—of what was pleasing to God both in worship and practice, than by their diligence in acting accordingly.

This, at least, was the righteousness on which they prided themselves in later days, as in the days of St Paul—on their supposed nearness to God, from His clearer revelation of Himself to them. We may well doubt the justness of this their own valuation of themselves, when we remember our Lord's declaration in the Gospel, that—

'The servant, who knew not his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with few stripes; but he, that knew it, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. For, unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required.'

Is, then, the knowledge of our God, of man's relation to Him, of His Will concerning man, not to be desired by us 'above gold and precious stones'? Surely it is; but it must be an inward revelation to the heart, not a mere formula in the head, to be of any real value. One spark of love to God, the perfectly good, though mixed up with the smoke, as it were, of ignorance and superstition, approaches nearer to real knowledge of Him, than a mere assent of the understanding to the most exact form of words, which all the Doctors of all the Churches could ever draw up. We are formed by our Creator to love Goodness when we see it, to adore that Infinite Goodness which is Love, Allwise and Almighty. But we must see it first, before we can do so; and we must see it in Him, we must recognize it as His attribute, before we can love Him. Theologians have dared to say, building on certain texts of Scripture ill-understood, that man naturally *hates* God. Yet they have not carried out this notion by asserting that men habitually, bad as they are, *hate Goodness* as such, and love Evil for its own sake, and not for some adventitious good—or supposed good—which is attached to it. No! Goodness—the essential excellency of the Divine character—is loved, adored, by all, in their heart of hearts. But when man would attain to it himself,—when he would add to his faith human goodness, which is *virtue*—that, however lovely, is hard, is difficult: the flesh shrinks back from the needful effort. Nay, the flesh, the mere animal selfish nature, knows nothing of virtue, of goodness, but only of what is pleasant or perhaps profitable. It has no faculty for goodness—any more than the beast of the field can appreciate beauty of form or colour. Hence it shrinks

back from the effort needful that the man should *become* 'righteous,' as his Father in Heaven is righteous; and the spirit, though it still loves righteousness, and adores goodness, yet if it be not upheld by the Spirit of God, will yield in the inevitable strife,—'the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.'

This explains, in some measure, the apparent aversion of men from God and Goodness—in some measure, but not wholly. For much of it—very much—arises from want of a true knowledge of God and Goodness,—from their forming first defective and erroneous views of the Divine Character, and then applying these to corrupt their notions of Goodness. As I have said, the value of knowledge—however correct—even of the things of God, would be nought if it remained unfruitful in the heart and in the life, a mere matter for speculation for the head and understanding. And, indeed, the mere intellect is far too low a faculty to take more than a very partial—almost a negative—view of these sublime matters: it can see what God is *not*—it cannot see what He is. Yet, if a man's creed contain theories and assertions concerning God, which are false and monstrous, which not only fail to guide, but which 'darken counsel by words without knowledge,' his moral standard must necessarily suffer. Amongst barbarous nations what a fearful influence for evil has the worship of cruel and impure deities had upon the minds of their worshippers! But what is the God whom many Christians worship? Is He One who is Holy, Just, and Good? Nay, though in words they call Him so, they not unfrequently ascribe such acts to Him as are incompatible with any degree of such attributes. How surely, for instance, does that notion of a Church, in which the Almighty is *interested*!—*His* party being one amidst the many parties into which civilized society is split!—lower the thoughts of all who entertain it towards the Great God our Father! How does it also lower the characters of those who persuade themselves that they are His partisans,—embitter their feelings towards all who oppose them, tempt them to think that lying, evil speaking, and slandering, suppression of the truth, distortion of fact, watching for the stumbling of their enemy, 'laying a snare for him that reproveth in the gate,' and making a man an

offender for a word,—that any baseness is sanctified by so great and holy an end, as to entice or drive men into that Church of theirs, out of which there is no salvation! How contrary is such a notion to the words of Jesus, ‘My kingdom is not of this world!’

There is a subtle falsehood, then, in those hackneyed lines—

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

There is, no doubt, also, besides the falsehood, a truth which has given these lines their currency. The offering of a pure heart, issuing in a pure life, will surely not be less acceptable to the ‘God of the spirits of all flesh,’ who sees the very thoughts and intents of the heart, because of any mere intellectual defects in the knowledge of him who offers. Yet assuredly, as I have said, there are mistakes, especially concerning Him whom we adore, concerning His Character and His Will, which must affect the character and conduct of the worshipper. Would any, who had heard the revelations of God in the Gospel, be excusable for the wholesale butcheries or the treacherous murders, by which even pious persons among God’s ancient people thought to serve Him? ‘Modes of faith’ are of importance, but only as they affect the heart and life of the believer.

The writer, then, of this ancient story had, we must suppose, a very vague notion of what it was to be ‘righteous.’ *This* he thought, and thought rightly, that God’s Favour belonged to the righteous man, and his words amount to this—‘How well it must be for those who are under the protection of the Mighty Jehovah! They are safe and blessed even in death!’ Is not this a strain beyond what we should have expected even from a believer in Jehovah in those days? Does it not remind us of the more fervent words of the Psalmist—

‘My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion for ever!’

As our Church Article says—

They are not to be heard who feign that the old Fathers did look only  
for transitory promises.

Whatever theory they may have had about another life, or if, as is likely, they had none, yet a real faith in the Living Personal God, a cleaving of heart to Him, must

blossom into a hope full of immortality. 'Precious,' says the Psalmist, 'in the sight of Jehovah is the death of His Saints!' Could anyone expect extinction, annihilation, who felt 'the Love of God, shed abroad in his heart,' in the midst of the failing of Nature? But for us this prayer is equally suitable and has a deeper meaning. The 'glorious Gospel of the Blessed God' has shown us a *Father* in Heaven. But, while we have thus learned that we are sons, have we not, most of us, alas! learned also that we have been prodigal sons, disobedient, rebellious, forsaking our Father's house and slighting His Love? Yes! the strong light, which the teachings of Jesus have thrown on the Law of God, revealing its deep spiritual requirements,—and not his words only, but his life and his death,—have given us a standard which must, if it is realized, introduce penitence into our lives, not as a mere outward form or occasional service, or as a kind of composition for our offences, but as the spirit of our daily life—as the true temper of those who see their own baseness, selfishness, and coldness, in the light of God's pardoning, paternal Love.

This repentance—a continual daily turning to God—will make the last, the inevitably remorseful last, look at life, from the dying pillow, less bitter, less intolerable, even for those who will have much in themselves, in their own course, to regret. But, if deferred till then, with what anguish will it come? Yes! penitence is needful—not to propitiate our angry God—not as the attitude of a slave, who crouches creeping to avert the uplifted lash,—but because it is the right, the truly human, feeling for those who see their own inward faults and the transgressions of their lives. And but little indeed does anyone know of the comfort and relief of such repentance, who would dream of putting it off till all opportunity was over of obeying the gracious words—'Go, and sin no more!'

Nor in any other respect can a godly ending be made to a life which has been without God. Those who have crushed out their higher aspirations, and lived a mere careless worldly life, without a thought of the Unseen Hand which was guiding them, without a reference to the Will of the Lord of their conscience, without any desire to be conformed to the image of His Son,—will have little power or

courage to grasp that Unseen Hand, and rest their souls upon it, when the senses are failing. Faith, affiance, trust, in the Unseen is not a single act: it is a habit of soul, generated by many acts, by constant acting. The 'life of the righteous' is a life of faith. Without faith, without a belief in, a trust in, God, how can the soul stand upright in the midst of life's storms, or stand firm against its ' manifold temptations?' Even when explicit faith may have been lost or overshadowed for a time, what is every act of virtuous self-denial, but a homage to the Unseen?

The 'righteous' then—the faithful—are 'blessed in their death,' with the same blessedness which they enjoyed in their lifetime. There is no other possible. Infinite as is the Mercy of our God, and Great as is His Power, He *cannot make the Past not to have been: and, remember, we are making it now that which it will be for ever!*

Some there are, who indulge their fancies in picturing the other world, at least the entrance of it,—grouping their lost ones on the shore of the dark river, with companies of angels, and many attending circumstances, which tempt those, who are impatient of unrealities, to turn away from the whole as a childish dream. But let us bear with the weakness to which these images afford a consolation. It is at least true that the faithful soul is not alone. It is one of a vast company, who are marching on at God's command, and following him, who has gone before, and entered in, as we believe, within the veil, the Captain of our Salvation.

## XVI.

### THE DUTY OF PRAISING GOD.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 22, 1866.

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Ps. CVII. 8.

'O THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE JEHOVAH FOR HIS GOODNESS, AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN.'

THE text sets before us three subjects for consideration this morning,—

- (i) That God is Good,—
- (ii) That His Goodness is active and flowing out in 'wonderful works' towards men,—
- (iii) That it is our duty—the duty of all men—to praise Him.

'O that men would praise Jehovah for His Goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.'

These are the thoughts which filled the old Hebrew Psalmist's heart, between two and three thousand years ago, when he wrote these words. Who he was we know not: there is not even a superscription to the Psalm, ascribing it to David, or Asaph, as in the case of so many others. And, if there were, it would prove nothing; for there is not the slightest dependance to be placed on these superscriptions or titles, which are only the guesses of men, who lived in a later age, and made the collection of Psalms which we now possess, as to the probable or possible authorship of them: and in most cases their conjectures are known to be erroneous. Our Prayer-book indeed calls them all 'the Psalms of David:' and this is another instance of the prevalence down even to our own times of traditionary views, which have long been rejected as mistaken by all persons of any learning, acquainted with the

real facts of the case. Some, in fact, of these Psalms, which are here called the 'Psalms of David,' refer distinctly to the time of the Babylonish Captivity, and were therefore written after this event. Thus, for instance, the 74th Psalm refers in v.2 to 'Mount Zion,' in which 'Jehovah dwelt,' and therefore could not have been composed *before* the time of David, when Mount Zion was first captured from the Jebusites, and made the site of David's Tabernacle, 'Jehovah's dwelling-place,' as it was afterwards of Solomon's Temple. But in the verses following the Psalmist describes the destruction of the Sanctuary:—

'Lift up Thy feet unto the perpetual desolations,  
 Even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the Sanctuary:  
 Thine enemies roar in the midst of Thy congregations;  
 They set up their ensigns for signs.  
 A man was famous according as he had lifted up  
 Axes upon the thick trees.  
 And now the carved work thereof at once  
 They break down with axes and hammers.  
 They have cast fire into thy Sanctuary,  
 They have defiled the dwelling-place of Thy Name to the Ground.'

And, in fact, it is certain, that very many of the Psalms were written after the Captivity, and that comparatively but few of them were written by David himself.

But what matters it who wrote these words? They express the thoughts of a living man like ourselves in that far-off age, of one who had infirmities like ours, who had to struggle, no doubt, with temptations and trials from within and from without, just as we have,—of one who had the same Divine helper supporting him all along in his conflict with evil, as we have now, the same Divine Teacher lightening his eyes and quickening his heart.

(i) And so our brother felt in his inmost soul that God was Good—he would have 'men praise Jehovah for His Goodness.'

To say that 'God is Good' seems to us, perhaps, the merest truism. And many indeed suppose that our very word for the Supreme Being—I mean the word 'God'—expresses 'the Good One'—though this derivation of the word is by no means certain, and is most probably not correct. We know at all events that the earliest ideas of God were not connected with thoughts of His Goodness. The name 'Elohim' in the ancient Hebrew records—the most ancient archives of the faith of living men—implies



the Strong or Mighty One—or rather, perhaps, the Being to be feared and dreaded; and the plural form of this Hebrew word expresses the highest degree of this attribute. Neither did the later name Jehovah—the ‘Living One’—full as it is of awful meaning, express any moral attribute whatever. With the Psalmists and Prophets of old, then, it was no ordinary utterance—it was the expression in words of a revelation from Heaven to their hearts—when they said that ‘God is Good’—‘Jehovah is Gracious’—

‘Jehovah is loving unto every man, and His tender mercies are over all His works.’

Not, perhaps, in some momentary flash of inspiration did such thoughts come to them, but as the result of life-long experience and observation—of deep meditation upon the ways and works of God—even as we read at the end of the Psalm before us—

‘Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and he shall understand the Loving-kindness of Jehovah.’

Yet still they were a revelation to their minds of the Divine Character. They were the fruits—the rich reward—of pious prayerful lives, during which they walked with God, and gained from that blessed communion more clear views of their relationship to the Father of spirits. And, what they gained in this way, they have handed on to us, and we enter from our very childhood upon the full enjoyment, not only of these portions of our great inheritance, but of that still clearer and fuller revelation of our Father’s Love which is made to us in the Gospel of Christ, and of which our Lord said—

‘Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.’

Let us inquire, however, a little more closely into the meaning of our words when we speak of the Goodness of God, of Him who created the Heavens and the Earth. And here it must first be said that this is indeed a subject on which we cannot arrive at certainty by means of *Science*. Those Heavens and this Earth do not contain the answer to our question,—What is the moral character of Him by whose Will and Wisdom they exist, for whose ‘pleasure they are, and were created?’ How, then, shall we attain

to a clear idea as to what the Goodness of God is? Will it be said, We shall find it in 'the Book?' We thankfully acknowledge that it is even so. But who beheld the hand out of the cloud, which wrote these mystic characters? Or where is the Prophet that can interpret them? In other words, what warrant have we for taking those devout imaginings of pious men in the days of old for a message to our souls from Him of whom they speak? Are they not mixed with manifest fables, with self-contradictory statements? Do we not find, in the same page with the pure gold of the sublimest moralities, actions ascribed to the Supreme Being, which are unworthy of a wise and good *man*? Doubtless, we do, and it is far better to acknowledge as fact what we see to be so, than to ascribe to God anything unworthy of Him,—that so, as our Lord has taught us to pray, our Father's Name may indeed be hallowed, and kept separate evermore from human weaknesses, imperfections, and pollutions.

But what, then, is Goodness? Some there are who reproach us for insisting on the Goodness of God, as if by Goodness we meant only *Pity*,—an unwillingness to inflict suffering, a desire to make all sentient creatures happy and comfortable,—as if we worshipped what men call 'good-nature,' and had no higher, no deeper, conception of God than of Good-Nature carried to its highest degree. This is a reproach very commonly levelled against all those, who refuse to ascribe 'vindictiveness' to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and such a Deity as this notion implies—one who cannot bear His creatures to suffer, who has not the heart to punish,—we shall certainly look for in vain, either in Nature, or in History, or in our own hearts. Nay should we not despise such a Being? Do we not see the spoiled and petted child, while it runs to the arms of its doting mother or nurse at every pain or fear, treat her often with anything but respect? Rather, is it not notorious that children ever love those best, whose kindness to them is wise and firm, whose will is unmovable by their caprices? We do not call a man *good*, who, from an unwillingness to grieve or pain his children and dependants, allows all kinds of waste and even vice to flourish within the borders of his house, his estate, his kingdom. In men, pity and active benevolence is limited by the sense of jus-

tice, as well as by lack of power. But, while God is Infinite Pity, and His mercies are over all His works, be sure, O sinner, that you are filling for yourself a bitter cup by every wilful transgression !

No ! let us think of the Divine Goodness as willing that which is really best for all and each of His rational creatures—as willing human *virtue*, not merely what men call happiness, not merely ease, comfort, enjoyment—as willing that they should be raised, perfected, ever more and more as spiritual, moral, intellectual things, and have the blessedness which belongs to them as such. Then we shall not stumble at the sorrows and pains of which the world is full. The dark pages of human history will have a light cast upon them ; and, if we cannot yet read them all aright, we shall rest in the conviction that they have a meaning consistent with what our hearts bid us believe concerning the Almighty Father.

For it is not Science—it is not even the Bible—it is the oracle in our own breasts, to which we must ultimately put the question. However helped it may be, and prompted, by external teaching, it alone can give the answer. To whom amongst men do we give the title of ‘ good ’ ? Surely to him who labours most, or who suffers most, to raise his fellow-creatures in the scale of being,—to whom mere selfish aims are lost in the desire to help the oppressed, to succour the weak, to teach the ignorant. The power, the wisdom, to effect these things, may be more or less ; and in these subordinate respects the man may be more or less like the All-Mighty and All-Wise. But the central point of resemblance—that which makes him good, god-like, in our estimation—is the will, the ardent desire, to be a saviour in any sense to his fellow-men—a destroyer of all that tends to destroy them. And is not this emphatically the brightest feature in that Divine Image, which has been enshrined in so many hearts for so many ages,—which wears the crown of thorns and the marks of suffering,—which has been reflected more or less brightly in the lives of so many saints and martyrs ? Can we find a trace of *selfishness*, of *self-exaltation*, in that ? Was it not as servant of all, as one who had come not to be ministered unto but to minister, that Jesus especially showed forth ‘ the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father ’ ?

From early times it has been a human instinct to worship the Saviours, the Deliverers, of the Nation. In the chivalry of the Middle Ages, when the Knight girded on his armour, not in any quarrel of his own, but in the cause of the helpless, we see gleams of the same idea, which is surely now acknowledged in all Christian countries as the type of what man should be—as the idea of ‘Goodness.’ It is hard, doubtless, to forbear to ask, Why does not He, who has the power, set all things right? Why do the oppressed still groan? Why above all are such masses of the human race left in their degradation?—or to answer with courage and cheerfulness, In God’s own time, which must be the best, all shall be set right. But we must do so, or what is the alternative? If we let go our trust in the Goodness of God, we must disown or give the lie to our own spiritual being, its most deep and living convictions, its plainest utterances. We must shut our eyes to the whole spiritual world. We must forget that we ever loved or revered any one, that any character in history or fiction ever won our admiration, that we ever said, ‘Well done!’ to the generous, the self-sacrificing, the patient warrior. We must set down man as only the most cunning animal. And how much in the history of the race and of the individual will then remain unexplained and inexplicable!

(ii) For wonderful, says the Psalmist most truly, ‘are the works of Jehovah towards the children of men.’

The history of man is the history of those works—mixed up, indeed, with the perverse workings of the human will. Yet it has been all along a progress upwards on the whole,—the path growing brighter and more bright, though crossed at times with blackest shadows even when the light shines brightest, with hideous idolatries and superstitions, hatreds and persecutions, within and without Christendom—the most oppressive and arrogant of all despotisms, that over the conscience of men, having its stronghold amongst those who worship, and profess to love and follow, the meek and lowly Jesus. Yet, throughout the whole course of human history, Divine truths, we know, have again and again been born of fierce conflict—light has come out of darkness—the very wrath of man has praised the Lord.

And still is He working wonderfully in the midst of us

—making known to us His Might and Wisdom, revealing His Goodness. And we must reverently heed the revelations which He makes to us in the present age as well as in the days gone by. Much as the Hebrew Psalmist may have marked of the signs of God's Goodness in His dealings with men,—much as he may have pondered these things, till he came to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord,—we know far more than he did—and the grand discoveries of Science—of Astronomy, and Geology, and other branches of study,—which are now made the common inheritance of every educated Englishman,—furnish unceasing proofs of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of our Great Creator—which we must not neglect—which we are bound to consider and lay to heart, as grounds for deeper thankfulness and more confiding trust in His Love.

‘Oh that men would praise the Lord for His Goodness,  
And for His wonderful works to the children of men.’

(iii) To praise the Creator is the glory and privilege of man—to praise Him consciously, and with the lips to confess the excellence of Him whom all creatures praise unconsciously, by ‘fulfilling His Word.’ What are we, indeed, we might say, that we should praise *Him*?—like children looking at the work of some mighty artist of surpassing genius, and prattling of what they see! Yet it is permitted to us to see something, and by gazing to grow in insight. We may find fuel for our praise, while we chiefly adore His Goodness, in studying our Father's works.

‘All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy Saints shall bless Thee!’ Whatever of goodness in any child of man moves our reverence, draws forth our love towards him, we may refer at once to the Father of spirits, and bless the glorious Being who has given such grace unto men, and of whose Divine Perfections these human forms of goodness are witnessing. But also whatever of Power, of Intellect, of Genius, awakens our admiration and commands our homage, this too, let us remember, claims the same high parentage: they are but rays from the Father of Lights, bright sparklings from the glory that surrounds His Throne. Some are most moved to rapture by the discoveries of Science—some by the genius of the poet or of the artist. But let us render praise for all to Him from whom alone

these wondrous powers proceed. In that great gathering, which is shortly to be made in the French Capital, of the natural productions of all parts of the earth, and of the use to which man's genius has turned them, what wonders of God's work there will be to stir the devout heart to thankfulness and adoration—while considering the Wisdom and the Goodness, which have fitted this world, with such innumerable appliances, to be the dwelling-place of man—have supplied it with all things needed not only to minister to his bodily wants, his comforts, his enjoyments, but to feed his eye, and refresh his mind, with grace and beauty—have prepared for his use, in the great primeval swamps of the ancient world, long ages before he was placed upon this earth, those masses of vegetable matter, from which he derives his coal and drives his machinery—have laid down also the beds of lime and clay and sand-stone, the minerals and the granites, which man may take wherewith to build his dwellings—have arranged all these things with express reference to such a being as man, to be placed on the earth at some future period—have tilted up the different strata, by shocks of earthquakes, or mighty movements of slow upheaval or depression, so that they no longer lie now, as many of them were deposited at first, horizontally, buried altogether out of sight one under another, but their original position is changed, and they lie now inclined to the horizon, and sloping upward, and come therefore to the surface at different places, and so man can get at them, and supply his different needs abundantly—ay, and above all, which have given to man himself the power and skill to make use of these treasures stored up for his use, to turn them to account for his machinery and his buildings, and so to rise more and more from the state of the savage to that of the highly civilized and Christian Man.

Ah! brethren, for what will all this progress in arts and sciences—in outward civilization—avail us, if we do not inwardly advance also in that knowledge of God which is Life Eternal—if we do not seek to praise Him for His Goodness not only with our lips, but by our lives—by walking before Him as dear children, receiving at our Father's hands day by day the gifts of His Love, and ren-

dering back to Him the offering, which He desires of us, of childlike, pure, and loving hearts, obedient to His Will, and growing more and more into conformity with it ?

‘I beseech you, therefore, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world’—to its selfish maxims and principles, its unworthy practices, its sensual pleasures. ‘But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.’

## XVII.

### THE PROPHET AND THE PRIEST.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1866.

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2 PET. I. 20, 21.

'KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION. FOR PROPHECY CAME NOT OF OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.'

LET me first remind you of a fact, which I mentioned on a former occasion, that this 'Second Epistle of Peter' is one of the most disputed books of the whole New Testament. It is not mentioned by any writer earlier than Origen, who flourished about the year 250 A.D. And, indeed, even this evidence is doubtful, since in the original Greek text of his writings,—'and it is on these only that absolute reliance can be placed,' *Westcott*, p. 407,—

he nowhere either quotes or mentions the Second Epistle of St Peter; on the contrary, he quotes the 'epistle of Peter' in such a manner as to show, at least, that the other epistle was not familiarly known. p.408.

Not one of the eminent Fathers of the Church, who lived before the time of Origen, as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, gives any sign of being acquainted with it—nor does Cyprian his contemporary. It is not named in the earliest catalogue of canonical books (the Muratorian Canon, 170 A.D.). Eusebius, who died in the year 340, expressly says, *Westcott*, p.476:—

Of Peter, then, one Epistle, which is called his former Epistle, is generally acknowledged: of this also the ancient presbyters have made frequent use in their writings as indisputably genuine. But that which is circulated as his *Second* Epistle we have received to be *not*



canonical. Still, as it appeared useful to many, it has been diligently read with the other Scriptures. The Book of the 'Acts' of Peter, and the 'Gospel' which bears his name, and the Book entitled his 'Teaching,' and the so-called 'Apocalypse,' or Book of 'Revelations,' we know to have been in nowise included in the Catholic Scriptures by antiquity; because no ecclesiastical writer in ancient times or in our own has made general use of the testimonies to be drawn from them. . . . So many are the works of Peter, of which I have recognized *one* epistle only as genuine and acknowledged by the ancient presbyters.

And so he places this Second Epistle among the 'disputed' books, ranking also as 'disputed,' or as decidedly 'spurious,' a number of other books which he names, the 'Acts' of Paul, the book called the 'Shepherd,' the 'Revelation' of Peter just named, the 'Epistle of Barnabas,' the book called the 'Teaching of the Apostles,' the 'Gospel according to the Hebrews'—

and moreover, as I said, the Apocalypse of John [that is our present Book of the Revelations] if such an opinion seem correct, which some, as I said, reject, while others reckon it among the books generally received. *Westcott*, p. 482.

This Epistle was first admitted into the Canon by an African Council at the very end of the fourth century. Yet even then it was not universally received; since Jerome, who died 420 A.D., writes in one place, *De Vir. Ill.* c.1—

Peter wrote two Epistles, which are called Catholick; of which, however, the second is denied by many to be his, because of the difference between its style and that of the first epistle.

This is information, which as Christians, in these days especially, you should possess, in order that you may be able to form something like a reasonable judgment upon the nature of the great controversies of our times. You cannot, indeed, be expected to have mastered all the details of Modern Criticism, or to be able to decide upon the accuracy, or otherwise, of all the various results, some of them, no doubt, of the greatest importance—which are the fruits of that Criticism. But you can at least judge fairly upon some points concerned. You can see plainly how little ground there is for the popular notion, on which some are still insisting so vehemently, of the absolute infallibility of Scripture—of its being placed by its very origin and history above the reach of all criticism. You can decide for yourselves whether the truth is most likely to be found upon the side of those, who either blindly shut their eyes, and

would shut your eyes too, to the facts of the case, or, if they know them, refuse to acknowledge them before men, and in practice utterly ignore them,—or those who desire to look the facts in the face, to strip away the mere accretions of ignorance and superstition, which have so long disfigured the true beauty, and hidden from us the true excellence of the Scripture, and to draw from these records of past ages those precious lessons of Eternal Truth, which shall endure for all times, by whomsoever they were first spoken or written, because they are living words,—words which go at once to the heart and conscience,—‘not words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,’—and, as such, are unaffected, and cannot indeed be touched, by the most deep and searching criticism.

Before I pass on, however, I will lay before you another extract from one who must be considered a very cautious and orthodox writer, since he has been selected to be the chief editor of the New Commentary on the Bible, which is being prepared under the authority of the present Archbishop of York. This writer, then, as might be expected, maintains himself, though somewhat doubtfully, the genuineness of this epistle; but he makes the following observations upon it: *Dict. of the Bible*, ii.p.808 :—

The Second Epistle of St Peter presents questions of far greater difficulty than the former. There can be no doubt that, whether we consider the external or the internal evidence, it is by no means easy to demonstrate its genuineness. We have few references, and none of a very positive character, in the writings of the early Fathers. The style differs materially from that of the First Epistle: and the resemblance, amounting to a studied imitation, between this Epistle and that of St Jude, seems scarcely reconcilable with the position of St Peter. Doubts as to its genuineness were entertained by the greatest critics of the early Church. In the time of Eusebius it was reckoned among the disputed books, and was not formally admitted into the Canon until the year 393 A.D., at the Council of Hippo. . . . That the two Epistles could not have been composed and written by the same person, is a point scarcely open to doubt. . . . If, however, we admit that some time intervened between the composition of the two works,—that in writing the first the Apostle was aided by Silvanus, and in the second by another, perhaps St Mark,—that the circumstances of the Churches addressed by him were considerably changed,—and that the second was written in *greater haste*, not to speak of a possible *decay of faculties*,—the differences may be regarded as insufficient to justify more than hesitation in admitting its genuineness.

‘Greater haste’! ‘decay of faculties’! in an apostle writing, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, infallible words of absolute eternal Truth! Surely you are well able, all of you, to see for yourselves how the matter really stands in respect of this question. And you will now understand why I do not quote the words of my text this morning as the words of an Apostle—still less, as direct utterances of the Spirit of God; while yet I do say that this and many other passages of this epistle, expressing, as they do, the deepest thoughts of a devout brother-man of those days, enlightened and taught, as all true Christians are, by the Spirit of God, contain Divine Teaching for us,—revelations made to his own mind of the things of God, the eternal truths by which our spirits live, and which he has done his best to communicate to us.

For, as I said last Sunday, it is idle for us, living in a different age, and under totally different circumstances, to speak of such a writing as this as a piece of imposture and forgery. Thus, for instance, the writer just quoted says, p.809,—

This Epistle must either be dismissed as a deliberate forgery, or accepted as the last production of the first among the Apostles of Christ. The Church, which for more than fourteen centuries has received it, has either been imposed upon by what must in that case be regarded as a Satanic device, or derived from it spiritual instruction of the highest importance.

No doubt, this epistle bears distinctly on its face the apostle’s name,—‘Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ,’ i.1. It professes to be a sequel, as it were, of the former epistle—‘This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you,’ iii.1. It speaks of the writer as having been an ‘eyewitness of the majesty of Christ,’ i.16,—as having—

‘heard the voice which came to him from heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.’

It personates the apostle speaking throughout:—

‘Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things. . . . Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.’ i.12-15.

‘That ye may be mindful of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour,’

iii.2. 'Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you ; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things ; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.' iii.15,16.

And yet, in spite of all this, you have heard that some of the most eminent Fathers of the Church, as Eusebius and Jerome, who actually knew of the existence of the epistle, —knew therefore of its containing all these words,—express no such horror, while they mention the doubts which in their days existed as to its genuineness, and the former, indeed, distinctly declares his own conviction that it was not canonical and therefore not apostolic. There were many devout men, then, in the first four centuries, who, though they were fully aware it professed in the strongest manner to have been written by St Peter, yet doubted or disbelieved the fact ; but, for all this, they never thought, as our modern theologians hasten to do, of applying to such a writing the reproachful term, 'imposture' or 'forgery.' And why was this ? Doubtless, because they recognized in this writing a vein of pure and holy thought, worthy even of an apostle, which runs through the whole of it—as when it speaks to us of that 'divine power,'—

'which has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue ; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust ;'—  
or when it bids us—

'add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity.'

Besides which, they knew that such practices—which we in our days should utterly condemn—were very common in the early Church ; and many of the apocryphal books of the New Testament were put forward in the names of apostles or apostolic men, evidently with devout intentions, for the purpose of gaining greater authority for the matters contained in them. There were, doubtless, some 'impostures,' Gospels and other writings, falsified for the very purpose of maintaining and propagating certain doctrines. And Jerome himself can hardly escape the imputation of having disgracefully lent the honour of his name

to support and spread such incredible falsehoods, as those which I once quoted to you from his *Life of St Anthony*.

But in this epistle we have probably the work of an earnest true-hearted man, writing near the end of the first century, when 'the fathers,' not only of the Jewish Church, but of the Christian also—the apostles and eye-witnesses of Christ—had 'fallen asleep,' and the expectation, which had been so fervently cherished—even by the apostles themselves—of the speedy coming of Christ, had been all along disappointed, and was now fast dying out. There were many, he tells us, saying in his days—

'Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless, we according to his promise look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

Desiring, then, to arouse his fellow-Christians from the deep slumber, the sensuality, into which he saw they were prone to fall, while waiting thus in vain for that speedy coming of Christ, which they had learned from apostolic lips to look for,—believing probably that his own authority—words written in his own name—would have little influence upon the men of his age, little effect in quickening and reviving that faith in the nearness of the event, which he himself still cherished,—he appears to have written this epistle in the name of St Peter, and with close imitation of that of St Jude—another epistle whose apostolic authority is also liable to very great doubt.

We need not then 'dismiss this epistle as a deliberate forgery,' though we do not receive it as the work of the apostle. We need not regard it as a 'Satanic device,' by which the Church has been 'imposed upon,' while 'deriving from it spiritual instruction of the highest importance.' That 'instruction' may be—rather, it is, no doubt—unsound, so far as it professes to inform us about the earth 'standing out of the water and in the water,' a notion irreconcilable with our modern knowledge of the earth as a globe, or to tell us that 'the world that then

was, being overflowed with water, perished,' a statement which directly contradicts the views of those, who attempt to reconcile the differences between Scripture and Science by speaking only of a *partial* Deluge, which overflowed only a portion of the ancient world, but which is itself contradicted by the fact which we now know, that no Universal Flood has ever swept over the globe since ages before the Scripture date of the Deluge. It may also be questioned whether the assertion that—

'the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire'—that '*the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved*, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat'—

rests on any authoritative basis, or, indeed, is in all points of the description consistent with scientific truth. We must dismiss the idea, which the writer evidently entertained, of the speedy coming of Christ in visible form to judge the world, and to set up, under 'new heavens' and upon 'a new earth,' a glorious kingdom, into which his saints should 'have an abundant entrance.' But there are other words in the epistle—Divine words—which, as I have said, go to the heart at once, and are felt to be true, whoever wrote, whoever spoke them. It is true that a day, 'the day of the Lord,' is coming, which shall try the secrets of all hearts and lives—that—

'The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

It is true that—

'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day':—

and further, that, in order to help us in preparing for that day, that we may not 'fall from our own steadfastness,' but daily 'grow in grace,' He has given us a sure word of 'prophecy'—

'Whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts—knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; for prophecy came not in old time—[rather, as the margin says, 'at any time']—by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved—[impelled, urged on]—by the Holy Ghost.'

There have been two orders of men, who have figured in the religious history of the world—the prophet and the priest. The priest is supposed to mediate between the

worshipper and his God, as being more holy than the former, not on account of any real moral or spiritual superiority being possessed by the individual priest, but in virtue of a formal separation from the business of the world, and consecration to the service of the sanctuary, with the possession of a special supernatural power. For the weakness of human nature aids have from time to time arisen, to keep alive in men the sense of the invisible, the faith in God. Hence it is that an order of men—so great has been the need—has appeared in every land, and from remotest times, who have been the priests. The savage or untutored heart, swayed by fear or hope towards the invisible world, seeks some sacred man—some one nearer God than he—to mediate for him, as the Romanist seeks the Virgin or the Saints. God only knows, who has suffered it, how black a page in human history the history of the priesthood has been, from the *isannsi* of the Zulu to the Jesuit of Christendom,—how ‘the fine gold has become dim,’ the finest and brightest specimens of man have been corrupted and distorted, by the false and poisonous notion that one man, or, rather, that one order of men, is nearer to God than others—that an order of men can be made the channel of Divine grace and communication in some magical manner. Mysterious, doubtless, are all Divine communications—but not more or otherwise mysterious than human nature and its Divinely-appointed relationships. But the notion of a priesthood is specially antagonistic to human relationships, and tends ever to interfere with them in the most *ungodly*, because *inhuman*, manner.

This notion of a separate priesthood is altogether alien to the spirit of Christianity, of which the leading features are the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man. ‘Ye are,’ says the first epistle of St Peter, ‘a royal priesthood’ :—

‘Ye are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’

The idea expressed in these words—the true Christian idea—is that all Christians as such are brought into the immediate Presence of God, and have access to His Throne, to present there their prayers, the offering of their hearts, the ‘fruit of their lips, giving thanks to His Name.’ The

Priest in the older time was the guardian of all that was external in the worship of God, the agent in offering burnt sacrifices, the person to burn the incense. But now that the Father is to be worshipped in spirit, and that no one outward form of worship is obligatory,—now that the sacrifices and the incense have been translated into their spiritual meanings of self-devotion and of prayer,—the priest disappears in the *presbyter* or elder, the *president* or officer, the *minister* or servant, of the congregation, to serve the higher nature in his brethren, to represent their unity, to be the mouthpiece of their united prayers. Any notion of priesthood which goes beyond this is a return to idolatry, that idolatry by which spiritual Christianity was overlaid at the Reformation, and which is now again stealing in amongst us, covertly indeed, but with rapid strides.

But the *Prophet* remains still what he has ever been, from the time when the Deuteronomist, a prophet himself, living most probably in Josiah's reign, but writing in the character of Moses, promised in God's Name to Israel that the race of Prophets should never be extinct among them—

‘A Prophet will I raise up from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him’—

yes, and before that age, from the very first, when men began to ‘feel after God, and find Him.’ The Prophet was not, like the Priest, set apart for his office by any human choice or ceremony of initiation. He was not chosen, like ‘the Priests the Levites,’ from any one particular tribe. ‘Would God,’ said Moses, ‘that all the Lord's people were prophets’! Not in Israel only, but amongst all peoples—in their infancy as well as in their more advanced time—have there been prophets,—men in whom the Divine gift of genius formed, as it were, the lamp, all ready-trimmed and furnished with oil for the flame of heavenly teaching, to be kindled by the breath of Divine inspiration.

For the word ‘prophet’ means literally in the Greek ‘one who speaks forth’—who utters the deep thoughts which lie hid in other men's breasts as in his own,—who expresses in plain words the Divine communications, which are made secretly to his own mind. It is not every one who has this gift—who is enabled by Divine help, not only to



have a clear vision of spiritual things, a fervid apprehension of them, a power of seeing, beneath the surface of events, their real causes and probable consequences, and from the hidden spring to foretell the future course of the stream of time, but also to utter these things in those impressive powerful words, which fasten them for ever, as Divine Eternal Truth, upon the hearts of men.

Ah ! brethren, that wondrous gift of articulate speech, how little do we think of it as the bond of union for the race in all ages—as the means whereby is maintained and kept alive in us the knowledge of Jehovah, the Living God—who has been and is the ‘God of our Fathers,’—for ‘all live unto Him’—who now is ours, and will be our children’s. It has been, indeed, a much-vexed question how man came to speak at all. Those who think of the first man as in a state of paradisaical perfection, and of his first hour as one full of adult life and vigour, ascribe to him of course the powers of speech full blown, as all his other powers. But the more completely such an idea fades before the light of Modern Science, and the Adam of Genesis becomes not historically, but only ideally and mythically, true,—so true, indeed, that his story, as that of humanity, is inwoven and ingrained in the literature of the world,—the more the question is opened before us, What was the origin of language ? Some there are who shrink from ascribing it to the natural and normal development of the human creature, as if in that way it passed from being a glorious divine gift into a mere kind of property, won for us by our own arm, our own cunning. *Our own !* What is ours, which we have not received ? Can we ascribe our *origin* to a Divine Power, a Creative Spirit, and then ascribe to ourselves all those perfections, which time and growth and exercise bestow upon the accomplished human being ? Must the first simple utterances, expressing the first and simplest wants, have been syllabled in the ears of the first man and woman by a voice from the clouds, or out of the voiceless air, while the wonderfully complicated instrument, which speech has now become for expressing every thought and feeling, is *not* the gift of God ? No ! let us believe that, according to His own laws, the Great Creator has wrought out for man, by means of those faculties which He has Himself bestowed, the whole of that varied and wonderful world of words. No

mere caprice on the part of this man or that has ordained that certain words shall express and convey certain thoughts: but, whether we can discover it or not, there is a law, there is a reason, for all.

But, if this be so, how much more shall we ascribe to Him those words—those living words—embodying those thoughts of power, which have lit up in one mind and in another the spiritual consciousness of humanity, and been reflected from one to another, till the Church of the Living God in all ages has been formed by the aggregate of their lights,—that Church in which he is confessed and adored,—where He is present also by His Spirit, in the Temple which thus His Word has formed. For that Living Word, which is the Light and life of men, is speaking in all those words of our fellow-men, which have brought us the clearer knowledge of Him ‘whom no man hath seen or can see.’ Such words as these may truly be called *His Word*, the Word of God, and be received and revered by us as such, even as says the apostle :—

‘Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.’

Let the young, then, the ignorant, the unlearned, listen reverently to the voice of their teachers as Prophets of God to them. Let those also who have the privileges and responsibilities of adult age, and sufficient culture, listen reverently to those who *profess* to have a message from God to them. But let them not lay aside the right and the duty, which is theirs, to ‘try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are in the world.’ And let them be sure that, as it is God who teaches them by means of their fellow-men, they may expect that He will speak to them so that they can hear and understand,—that He will speak to their hearts, and carry inward demonstration to their spirits,—that He will speak to them of those things which concern their own spiritual life, and, when He speaks, His words will come home to them, and will be their own evidence.

## XVIII.

### THE FATHER OF LIGHTS.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 29, 1866.

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JAMES I. 16—18.

‘DO NOT ERR, MY BELOVED BRETHREN. EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING. OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRST-FRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.’

THERE is some doubt by whom this epistle of St James was written. There were, as we know, two apostles who bore this name. There was James the Great, as he is called, the son of Zebedee and brother of St John, who was put to death very early in the history of the Church, when, as we read in the Acts—

‘Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword.’

The epistle was certainly not written by him, as we gather from its contents, which imply by its expressions a much later state of things than could have existed in his time, as well as from the voice of tradition. That voice ascribes it to James the Less, one of those who are called in the New Testament, according to Jewish custom, the *brethren* of our Lord, though they were really the sons of Mary, the sister of the mother of Jesus, and therefore what we should call his first-cousin. This James appears to have filled a prominent position in the Church of Jerusalem in the apostolic times. When Peter was delivered from prison, and went, as we are told, to the ‘house of John, whose surname was Mark,’ he said to the damsel who came to the door to admit him, ‘Go, show these things unto James and

to the brethren.' When the first Council was held at Jerusalem, and Barnabas and Paul had declared what God had done among the Gentiles by them, it is James who rises to address the assembled Church, and who suggests the course which was actually adopted. On a third occasion in the Acts James again occupies a foremost place, where the historian writes—

'And, when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James : and all the elders were present.'

And lastly St Paul, in the epistle to the Galatians, mentions that on one occasion he 'went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days,' and he adds—

'But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.' i.19.

This last statement certainly does not imply any necessary superiority in James, though it shows that he was a conspicuous member of the Church at Jerusalem. But, in the next chapter, where St Paul speaks of a second visit which he made to Jerusalem, fourteen years after the first, he places James at the head of those whom he styles the 'pillars' of that Church, naming him first in order, even before Cephas (Peter) and John :—

'And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.' ii.9.

And afterwards he speaks of 'certain coming from James,' evidently as deputed by him to observe the proceedings of St Paul at Antioch.

There can be no doubt, then, that James filled the office, which the tradition of the Church ascribes to him, as first Head or Bishop of the Church at Jerusalem. But the question then arises whether he was the same as the other apostle James, the son of Alphæus or Cleopas,—for these are only different forms of the same name. It seems, on the whole, most probable that he was, though the matter is much disputed by even the most orthodox writers. But, whether he was the apostle or not, it is to James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, the 'brother of our Lord,' and therefore certainly one who mixed very closely with the apostles, that the general tradition of the Church has ascribed this epistle, though not indeed with positive cer-

tainty. Thus Eusebius writes, in the middle of the fourth century :

These accounts are given respecting James, who is said to have written the first of the General (or Catholic) Epistles : but it is to be observed that it is considered spurious. Not many, in fact, of the ancients have mentioned it, nor that either, which is said to be Jude's, and which is also one of the seven (so called) General Epistles. Still we know that these also were publicly used with the rest in most churches. ii.23.

The 'accounts' to which Eusebius refers, and which he had just given, of the life of this James, from the writings of an earlier historian, Hegesippus, who lived about a hundred years after the time of the apostles, 175 A.D., are very singular, and would throw considerable light on the contents of the epistle, if it was really due to him. Hegesippus writes as follows :—

From the apostles, James, the brother of the Lord, succeeds to the charge of the Church,—that James who has been called the Just from the time of the Lord to our own days ; for *there were many of the name of James*. He was holy from his mother's womb ; he drank not wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat animal food ; a razor came not upon his head ; he did not anoint himself with oil ; he did not use the bath. He alone might go into the holy place ; for he wore no woollen clothes, but linen. And alone he used to go into the temple, and there he was commonly found upon his knees, praying for forgiveness for the people ; so that his knees grew dry and hard like a camel's, from his constantly bending them in prayer, and entreating forgiveness for the people. On account therefore of his exceeding righteousness he was called 'the Just,' and the 'bulwark of the people,' and 'righteousness,' as the prophets declare of him. Some of the seven sects, then, which I have mentioned, inquired of him, 'What is the door of Jesus ?' And he said that this man was the Saviour ; wherefore some believed that Jesus is the Christ. Now the forementioned sects did not believe in the Resurrection, nor in the coming of one who shall recompense everyone according to his works : but all who became believers believed through James. When many, therefore, of the rulers believed, there was a disturbance among the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, saying, 'There is a risk the whole people will expect Jesus to be the Christ.' They came together therefore to James, and said, 'We pray thee, stop the people, for they have gone astray after Jesus as though he were the Christ. We pray thee to persuade all that come to the Passover concerning Jesus ; for we all give heed to thee ; for we and all the people testify to thee that thou art just, and acceptest not the person of man. Persuade the people, therefore, not to go astray about Jesus, for the whole people and all of us give heed to thee. Stand therefore on the gable of the temple, that thou mayest be visible ; and that thy words may be heard by all the people.' . . . Therefore they placed James on the gable of the temple, and cried out to him and said, 'O Just one, to whom we

ought all to give heed, seeing that the people are going astray after Jesus that was crucified, tell us what is the door of Jesus ?' And he answered with a loud voice, 'Why ask ye me about Jesus the Son of Man? He sits in heaven on the right hand of great power, and will come on the clouds of heaven.' . . . And they cried out saying, 'Oh! oh! even the Just is gone astray.' They went up therefore, and threw down the Just one, and they said to one another, 'Let us stone James the Just.' And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall. But he turned round, and knelt down, and cried, 'I beseech thee, Lord God, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' . . . Then one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat the clothes, and brought it down upon the head of the Just one. And so he bore his witness.'

It is impossible to say how much of all this story is true, more especially as it differs considerably from the account which Josephus gives of the martyrdom of James: and it is most probable that we have here—even in this early age, about the middle of the second century—another instance of the rapid growth of mythical and legendary stories in the Church, clustering around the memories of its founders. But this, at all events, seems to be certain that James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, was martyred, and also that he was eminently noted as 'James the Just,' that he lived himself a strict and holy life, laying more stress upon the practice of righteousness than on the mere profession of an orthodox faith. And this is the very characteristic which, as you are well aware, singularly distinguishes the epistle before us. From beginning to end it is a series of lessons upon the daily duties of common life. Religion and morality are treated throughout as one and the same thing; or, if the writer recognizes for a moment the notion of their being separated, it is to tell us that 'if any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain,'—it is to bid us to 'be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves,'—it is to warn us again and again that 'as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.'

So strongly was this felt, as you have heard, no doubt, by the great Reformer Luther, who preached so strenuously the doctrine of faith—a simple trust in God's promises, a childlike dependence on His forgiving Mercies and Fatherly Love, in opposition to the slavish spirit of dependence on rights and ceremonies and priestly mediation, engendered

by the corruptions of Rome—that he called this epistle ‘an epistle of straw in comparison with St Paul’s writings;’—that is, he did not call it absolutely ‘an epistle of straw,’ as his words are commonly reported, but only relatively to that rich treasure of evangelical truth—the ‘gold, and silver, and precious stones’—which he found in those of St Paul. For, indeed, he speaks elsewhere, in his preface to the epistle itself, very highly of its value :

This epistle of St James, although it was rejected by the ancients, I praise and account it good notwithstanding, for this reason that it sets forth no human teaching and presses home the Law of God. However, that I may speak my judgment about it, but without prejudice to any one, I regard it as no apostle’s writing, and this is my main reason for it. In the first place, that, in direct opposition to St Paul and all the rest of Scripture, it ascribes justification to works, and says, ‘Abraham was justified by his works, because he offered up his son,’ whereas St Paul, Rom.iv.2,3, teaches the contrary, that ‘Abraham was justified without works.’ . . . . But this James does nothing else but urge obedience to the Law and its works, and mixes up so confusedly one thing with another, that it seems to me he must have been some pious man, who as a disciple had caught up and set on paper some sayings of the apostle.

In truth, as Hegesippus says in the passage which I have just before quoted, ‘there were many of the name of James’; and it is quite possible that one of these, not James the apostle, nor James the first Bishop of Jerusalem, but some other James altogether, who was merely, as Luther says, a ‘disciple’ of the apostles, may have composed this epistle. But in any case there is good ground for believing that it must have been written before the end of the first century. And thus we have undoubtedly in this epistle a very early instance of Christian teaching—either of an actual apostle of Christ, or of the first Bishop of the Christian Church, or at all events of one who had lived himself in the very age of the apostles of Christ, and no doubt was personally acquainted with their teaching. And it is certainly remarkable that he lays so much more stress upon righteousness of life than upon correctness of belief—that he lays no stress at all upon the latter, and that, though he would have uttered, beyond all doubt, a severe reproof, if he had found ‘any man that is called a brother’ to be ‘a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner,’ he does not give the least indication that he would have abjured the society of those who merely differed

from himself in matters of religious opinion, or refused to hold communion with them. Nay, he says that our religion, if it leads to 'bitter envying and strife,' to 'wars and fightings,' cannot be of heavenly birth—it is not the 'wisdom from above,' which is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.' He tells us that such 'wisdom' as that, which sends 'out of the same mouth blessing and cursing,' so that 'therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God,' whatever we may think of it, is 'earthly, sensual, devilish.' He says that 'pure Religion before God and the Father is this'—not the maintenance of an orthodox Creed, or observance of the 'strict law of the Church,'—to 'transgress' which, says one of our English Bishops, is 'simple rebellion against Christ,'—but 'to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's-self unspotted from the world.'

There is also another noticeable fact in this epistle, viz., that the *name* of Jesus or Christ is scarcely ever mentioned in it, while yet, I need not say, the true spirit of Christ pervades the whole of it. *Twice* only in these five chapters is any direct reference made to that name, and then only in a very general manner. Thus the writer begins by describing himself as 'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ'; and again he says—

'My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, of glory—[that is, either *the Lord* of glory, as our English Version fills up the blank which exists in the original, or, as others understand it, *that faith* of glory, that glorious faith,]—with respect of persons.'

These are the only instances in which he mentions the Saviour's name, while yet, holding firmly, as we see, 'the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,' though he might not have been able to declare his 'unfeigned assent and consent' to all the subtleties of all the Creeds. He speaks, as we have just heard, of 'pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father,'—of our 'blessing God, even the Father'; he tells us in the text that 'every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights.' And I need hardly remind you that, like our Lord himself, like St Paul and the other apostles, he instructs us 'when we pray, to say, Our Father.'



'If any of you lack wisdom, let him *ask of God*, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him';

'Draw nigh *to God*, and He will draw nigh to you.'

Yes! in *this* respect, as well others, the spirit of Christ, and of Christ's divine teaching, pervades the whole of this epistle—that spirit of patient trust in God's providential care and love, of steadfast desire and endeavour to do our Father's Will, of tender concern and brotherly-love towards one another, which marks the true Christian, one who is such in the heart and not merely in the head, and which is more pleasing in God's sight than the most fiery zeal and the loudest profession of love to the Saviour's Name. And we may devoutly trust and believe that spirit to be reigning even now by God's Grace in the hearts of many, who cannot pronounce the watchwords of this party or that, who may be given over by their more orthodox brethren to perdition, as heretics or unbelievers, but who are known of Him, who 'seeth in secret and shall one day reward openly,' each man according to his works. Nay, we may believe that there are many who do not acknowledge the Christian faith at all, and yet have been taught, and are now being led, by the Spirit of God. Surely, there are many such as these, and have been in all ages,—'meek, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers,' men who have been 'persecuted for righteousness' sake,' and whom Christ himself would have pronounced to be 'blessed,'—though they may not have outwardly confessed him as Lord, though they may not have even known his name, nor the name of the Living God. Inwardly, they *have* acknowledged the Son of God, the Living Word, who was speaking with them all along, as the Lord of their consciences, whenever they chose the good and eschewed the evil. They have bound themselves to His Law so far as it was revealed to them,—so far as they had light vouchsafed to them from the Father of Lights, wherewith to read it. The spirit of Christ, in fact, may be often ruling there, where his name may not be honoured or even known: while experience too plainly tells us, that the name of Christ may be very much upon men's lips, while his spirit—that spirit of 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,'—may be very far indeed from possessing the heart, and exhibiting its fruits in the life.

It is so now, and it was so of old, when St James wrote the words of the text. There were those then, who professed the faith of Christ, yet lived to dishonour it, and 'blasphemed that worthy name by which they were called.' And they tried to throw the blame of their sins upon the Blessed God, as if the nature which He had given them, or the circumstances in which he had placed them, had caused them to fall. St James raises his voice against this :—

'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'

We are all prone to do this: we are ever ready to be indulgent to ourselves, to find some excuse for our faults and shortcomings. Few, perhaps, will venture to charge their sins and miseries directly in plain words upon Him who made them: though it must be feared that, among the seething mass of untrained thought and feeling of the present day,—among the multitudes who have been driven from the true comforts and supports of Christian teaching, by the unreal superstitions of some or the hard and cruel dogmatism of others, or who are left without any teaching whatever through the neglect of those whom God has blessed with light,—such things may too often be heard. But we all indirectly do this, whenever we say of our faults or failings, 'I cannot help it, I cannot be a saint, if I would,'—or, 'My life is hard, I must rub through the world as best I can,'—'Who can keep his garments always clean? Who can touch filth, and not be defiled?'

But were you then, indeed, my brother, *compelled to sin*? And, if life is hard, and circumstances are trying,—hard and trying more or less for all of us, though in different ways,—yet if only God's gracious help is sure, what better school for virtue, for manly energy in resisting evil, could Infinite Wisdom have devised? For, when we use the expression 'Our *Maker*' with reference to ourselves as men, we feel that it is an imperfect phrase. All that God has made is good: all His works praise Him: each in its place fulfils His will. But for us, who are His offspring, His Will is our highest, and therefore our moral and spiritual, perfection. And, in order to attain this, we must 'work

out' our own salvation. There is no other road to it: virtue itself would not be virtue, if it were conferred entire and perfect on any creature. We may be sure, then, that God's way of training His children is best: we may realize the wisdom of St James's words when he says—

'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'

No! the trials and temptations of life are meant by Divine Wisdom and Goodness as our very means of education for the Kingdom of God. Not to harass and distress us merely, are they ordered—still less, to make us fall and be an excuse for our falling—but to prove us, and strengthen us, and perfect us more and more in the spirit of His children: and, whatever be the trial with which He sees good to try us, as St James says, 'He giveth more grace,' He gives us strength wherewith to overcome, if we will only use it. Our sins, he tells us, and the bitter fruits of our sins, were all our own; though God can turn that very bitterness to joy, and make it a healing medicine for the soul. But our goods and blessings of every kind—our comforts of hope, our feelings of penitence, our wisdom and virtue, our intellectual, moral, and spiritual achievements,—are all God's gifts of grace, bestowed on us by the Father of Lights, who is Absolute Goodness, unchanging and unclouded Light.

'Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

I do not imagine that any distinction is here meant to be drawn (as some suppose) between '*good* gifts' and '*perfect* gifts.' In fact, in the Greek original the words 'every good gift and every perfect gift' form a line of poetry, and may very probably have been quoted by memory from some well-known writing. What St James means to say is, that nothing evil came from God—that what He gives, whatever it may be, must be good and perfect, cannot be itself the cause of sin—that, if we sin in consequence of having received it, it is our lust which has dragged us on, which has conceived and brought forth sin, and then sin has brought forth death. We might apply this to a thousand different matters in daily life—to the health and strength,

the rank and wealth and beauty, the power and influence, mental or bodily, which are bestowed upon different individuals, and which are all 'good and perfect gifts' as they came from the Father of Lights, and as such should be thankfully welcomed by us, and used to the praise of the Great Giver, though they are frequently abused to His dishonour. But they are specially applicable to that wonderful increase of Scientific Light, which God has poured around us in this our day, and which it were as sinful to despise and reject, as it would be to shut our eyes to the Light, which streams to us from the pages of the Bible. The revelation to Man of each new fact of Science—Geological, Astronomical, Medical, Critical, whatever it may be—is a 'good and perfect gift from above, coming down to us from the Father of Lights.' And, if we are obedient children of the Living God, true sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, we shall gratefully receive the knowledge of such facts, and be sure that *they* cannot harm us—they cannot lead us into sin, into irreligion, ungodliness, atheism. It is only our corrupt hearts that can do this; and doubtless these hearts of ours may abuse this gift of God, as well as any other, and make it an excuse for their own unfaithfulness. But God's gifts still, the revelations of Science, are 'good and perfect,' and are meant for the setting forth of God's glory and the advancement of our own highest good. And we shall fail in our duty to the Father of spirits, we shall war against his gracious purpose towards us, if we do not cherish, with thankful earnestness and reverence, as a precious token of His favour, the increase of knowledge which He gives us in this our day, remembering that it is 'from above,' and, not as some seem to think, from the abyss of hell,—that it 'cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

Our God is here compared to the Sun, whose bright, pure light gladdens the whole earth, and is the life and joy of every sentient creature. And the resemblance is even more perfect and beautiful, when illustrated by the modern discoveries of Science, than even the writer could have supposed: since we now know that pure white light is made up of innumerable rays of different hues, which serve to shadow forth with their faint radiance the various

perfections of the Divine Character, but represent together, blended into one, the full bright glory of the 'Father of Lights,' that glory unapproachable by human thought, 'which no man hath seen nor can see.' But one difference St James has noted: the visible Sun shines not with constant brightness, glows not with steady power. The light and heat which it bestows are variable quantities: they are subject to change not merely through the daily interchange of day and night, but also from change of place or change of season. With Him there is no 'variableness,'—no change from 'parallax,' as the Greek original expresses it, like the difference of the solar power, perceived by leaving the burning soil of Egypt or Palestine for the colder regions of the frozen North,—no 'shadow of turning,' like that which we observe while standing fixed in the same place ourselves, and watching the midday shadows change in length, as the Sun approaches his northern or southern 'place of turning' or 'tropic.' No! our God and Father, blessed be His Name! is one and the same gracious Being, —'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,'—Jehovah, the 'Living God,'—the God of our fathers, the God of our children. His Love it is, which links the ages together by constant streams of goodness and blessing. From the first hour that an intelligent human being breathed upon this earth, He has been graciously revealing Himself more and more clearly and fully to the children of men. One 'good and perfect gift' after another has come down to us from above, from the Father of Lights: and by the wonderful gift of speech, and the art of writing by which that gift is supplemented,—both 'good and perfect gifts,' like the rest, though often so fearfully abused,—the knowledge of past ages has been handed on to our own; and we, through God's grace, are still being blessed with more, which we too must devoutly receive and pass on to others.

For, as St James tells us—

'By His own Will begat He us with the Word of Truth.'

The 'Word of Truth' is a seed of life when planted in the soul of man. There is no life in falsehood, in dead superstitions, in unreal forms, and formularies which have lost their meaning amidst the clearer light of the present day. The 'Word of Truth,' the Truth of God, in the heart and

mind, is a living, growing thing. If we think to shut it up in formulas, in unchanging letters, we shall lose it. As well might we attempt to imprison the sunshine and the common air, as to appropriate the Truth of God to our own exclusive use, by fixing it in some definite unchanging form of words. There was a time when men felt this, and breathed the fresh air, and walked freely in the light of day, under the first teachings of the Gospel. But then came the age of creeds and formularies, when men no longer moved at large on the surface of God's earth, rejoicing in their birthright as children of God, in 'the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free,' but followed age after age in the deep ruts worn by preceding ages, no longer walking in the light of God's Truth, but by the dim lantern-light of human dogmas and Church-articles. Words are indeed the vehicles of truth to us: but words ever tend to change, to decay, to lose their force by use. They need to be dipt in the fresh feelings of the heart, or they will be dead at least to us; and the mind thirsting after truth, after the knowledge of God, of real being, will be compelled to lay by old forms of belief, in order not to lose that belief which was once embodied in them. To hold, tenaciously, in short, by the old forms, when the meaning is departed, is but feeding on husks instead of living bread. And whatever there may be in our traditionary religious teaching, which bears this character, must be stripped off and swept away, while the precious kernel of truth will still remain.

For let us not doubt this, that in the past the Word of Truth was all along the seed of life in men's hearts as it is now. Mixed up with the superstition and ignorance of the early Church—with the myths and legends, the apocryphal gospels and epistles, the extravagant dogmas of Augustine, the absurd and lying stories of Jerome, the worship of the Virgin and the Saints, the adoration of relics and images, and all the countless follies and falsehoods which have corrupted the simple teachings of Christ,—mixed up with all this, I say, there has been a leaven of Divine Life, working ever insensibly in the hearts of men,—not, as they thought, by the agency of marvels and miracles, wrought by the hands, the clothing, or by the bones, of saints,—not by the zeal of fiery Bishops, excom-

municating one another, or by the decrees of Synods and Councils, enforcing a belief in creeds and dogmas, and condemning to uttermost perdition those who differed by one iota from them,—no, not in this way, by the threat of Divine judgments, or the infliction of temporal ones, not by the wind, the earthquake, and the fire,—but by the still-small voice of God's Spirit, speaking within the hearts of men, bidding them believe, and hope, and live, in the assurance of a Father's Love. 'Of His own Will begat He them with the Word of Truth.' In the teaching of the great Fathers of the Church, wrapped up often in a mass of conceit, of folly, ignorance, and untruth,—of which you have had some specimens brought before you in former discourses,—there was always the precious seed of the truth of God's Love, as revealed to us in all His dealings with us, and specially by the lips and in the life and death of Jesus our Lord. And this, when received into a kindly soil, into an 'honest and good heart,' under the influence of God's good Spirit, fructified and grew into a strong and living faith that worked by love, 'bearing fruit and bringing forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.' And so it is, we are sure, in the present day. In all the sects of Christendom, amidst all the varieties of Creed, mixed up, no doubt, in every portion of the Church with much of infirmity, ignorance, and error, the Word of Truth is still a seed of life, as ever, in the hearts of true men: it is by this they are begotten to a lively hope: by this they are quickened in faith and love. And our special privilege and joy is this, that, as we are enabled to take wider views of God's Love than others, while we realize, I trust, not less deeply than they His Truth and His Holiness, we can look around on them as embraced with us in the Arms of His Fatherly Goodness. You may have heard that the Romish Cardinal has just replied—we must suppose in the name of his Church—to those 'Anglo-Catholic' Clergy, who have approached his Eminence of late with an address, expressing their desire for communion with Rome, while still remaining priests of the English Church, and who have supported their request by saying—

Whatever may have been less perfect in the faith of the Flock, in Divine Worship and in Ecclesiastical Discipline, we have improved beyond our hope; and, not to be forgetful of other things, we have

shown an amount of goodwill towards the venerable Church of Rome, which has rendered us suspected in the eyes of some.

He has replied, indeed, and the voice of Rome is still heard, as in the days of old—

Whoever separate themselves in any manner from the unity of the faith, or from the society of him (Blessed Peter), such can neither be absolved from the bonds of sin, nor enter the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven.

There are others in our own Church ready to 'cut off,' as they say, 'from the Church of God,' those who do not hold with them that—what the Catholic Church, during the first thousand years of her history, declared to be or received as the true Faith, *that is the true Faith* and must be received as such. It is *our* joy to know that no child of man, whose heart has once been quickened by the Spirit of God, whom God has once 'begotten with the Word of Truth,' can ever be excluded by any human agency like this from the Church of God, that 'the gifts and callings of God are without repentance,' that He will never cast out a soul that truly loveth Him. And we believe that there are many such souls in the Church of Rome, by which we ourselves are excommunicated,—many such within our own Church, in the ranks of those whose zeal has outrun their charity,—who yet truly love God in their inmost hearts, and have been 'begotten by Him with the Word of Truth.' And beyond the narrow bounds of our own Church,—yea, beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church of Christ,—we believe that there are others, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, also 'begotten by the Word of Truth,' and truly loving and serving God, according to the light vouchsafed to them, of whom we may say, in the words of Richard Baxter, which I have formerly quoted—

I can never believe that a man may not be saved by that religion, which doth but bring him to the true love of God, and to a heavenly mind and life.

But, if our sphere of human love is thus enlarged,—if, begotten by the Word of Truth ourselves, we feel that there is room in our Father's heart for all,—let us never forget that 'by His Will' God has thus begotten us, and that Will is coupled with the purpose, as stated by St James in the text, 'that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.' This is true in the first instance of all Christians.



As the first-fruits under the Jewish Law—the choicest sheaf of the ripened grain—were offered in the temple, not to discredit and reject, but to sanctify, the whole, so Christians have been blessed with more light than others, that they should be the first-fruits of the whole human race—the choicest offering of the whole field of Humanity—not to condemn, but to sanctify, the whole. As St Paul says, ‘If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy.’ If the ‘Father of Lights’ of His own gracious Will—not because we loved Him, but because He loved us—has begotten us Christians with the Word of Truth to a hope more bright than that of other men, this is not to cast them off, and doom them, as some think, to endless misery—far be from us such blasphemy!—but to be to us a sign of hope, of goodwill from above, for them also,—to be a motive for our labouring with heart and soul on their behalf, and a pledge that our Father will be pleased with such work, and will abundantly bless our labours.

But especially are these closing words of the text true with reference to those among us, who have received the brighter light of the present day, and have rejoiced in it. ‘Let not our good be evil spoken of.’ Nay, rather, let not the ‘good and perfect gift,’ with which we have been blessed, be without its due effect upon our lives, in deepening our gratitude to the Divine Giver, in quickening our desire and strengthening our resolve to live as the children of God, and in widening our charity to all around us. We can afford to be patient, forbearing, gentle, towards others, who yet may condemn us; for we do not believe that our eternal hopes can depend upon our holding this or that particular article of faith. We may well lay to heart St James’ words, which follow the text, and be ‘swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath,’ as those who know that in our Father’s Love we are all embraced, and that ‘the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.’ But let us not be therefore ‘gentle’ to ourselves, ‘forbearing’ in respect of our own unfaithfulness, ‘patient’ in dealing with our own besetting sins. Let us not thus turn God’s grace into lasciviousness, and bring down His merciful judgments upon us. To us, surely, with tenfold power,

those words apply which St James wrote of old for his disciples :

‘Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.’

## XIX.

### THE NATURE OF PROPHECY.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 29, 1866.

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2 PETER I. 20, 21.

'KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT NO PROPHECY OF THE SCRIPTURE IS OF ANY PRIVATE INTERPRETATION. FOR PROPHECY CAME NOT OF OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN: BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.'

I EXPLAINED last Sunday that the word 'prophet' means literally one who 'utters forth' the Word of God to his brethren. In the epistles of St Paul it is frequently used in the sense of one preaching—not merely publishing or proclaiming the Gospel to those not yet acquainted with it—but explaining its principles, enforcing its precepts, delivering its admonitions, in words of power, which go home to the heart and conscience of the hearer. Thus St Paul says in one place, 1 Cor. xiv. 1 :—

'Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church. . . . If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But, if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are all the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.'

I need hardly say that this definition of a prophet, as one who speaks forth living words of truth in God's Name to his fellows, words which carry with them their own evi-

dence, is very different from the common notion which thinks of a prophet as a mere soothsayer, a prognosticator of future events—as one in whom we observe a mere mechanical exercise of the tongue or pen under the guidance of a force extraneous to, and foreign from, the prophet's own soul, by which the knowledge of future events is dictated to him. It is difficult to say what portions of the Old Testament contain distinct predictions of future events, uttered long before the time of those events, and with direct reference to them. One, indeed, of the most able writers of the day, the Prebendary of St Paul's, from whom I have before now quoted,—one who writes without any leanings towards (what is called) Modern Rationalism or Scepticism, and lays great stress on the authority of the Church for clearing away all Scripture difficulties, expresses himself on this point as follows (Dr Irons, *The Bible and its Interpreters*, p.125):—

It has been doubted, and it becomes a fair matter of inquiry, whether there is in all the Hebrew Scripture one such distinct prediction of the remote Future which concerns us, as the natural mind would ask. As to the carnal, and frequently immoral, idea of mere prognostic, that, at all events, is not the Christian idea. If we notice, for instance, a few references to the word of prophecy, met with at the beginning of the New Testament,—what do we see? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and 'the prophets' as a body, are all quoted as fulfilled in the Gospel story: but, in each instance, this 'fulfilling' is discovered to us by a mysterious method, through a kind of pervading *comment*. The birth of 'Immanuel' of a Virgin Mother, the 'Weeping in Rama,' the 'Flight' and 'Return from Egypt,' the Deliverer 'born in Bethlehem-Ephrata,' the 'Entry into Jerusalem,' the 'Coming suddenly to the Temple,' and the title of 'Nazarene,' are not so written of in these Prophecies, as naturally to convince us. The meaning found is not, in any one of these prominent instances, the meaning which our natural criticism would have supposed. We find that we must 'spiritualize' the Mother in Isaiah's vision, 'spiritualize' the lament in Rama, 'spiritualize' even the musing of Hosea, as to Egypt and God's Love to his people there: and more, we must 'spiritualize' the very prophecy of Micah against Assyria as to the Bethlehem Deliverer, and Zechariah's exultation of Triumph, and Malachi's sudden Epiphany, and take the unwritten testimony of the prophets as a whole, as to the Messiah's connexion with 'Nazareth,' of which no now-existing prophet appears to have said one word. Reading these quotations, or any of them, in the mere letter (to speak plainly), we are *disappointed*. And these examples are by no means exceptional.

It appears, in fact, distinctly, by the results of Modern Investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, that many passages, which were formerly supposed to have been written *before*

the events referred to, were really written after them—that Balaam's prophecy, for instance, with its mention of Agag and its reference to David, which were once believed to have been written by Moses 500 years before the time of David, was actually composed in David's time or after it—that the last chapters of Isaiah, which contain the name of Cyrus, and were believed to have been written by the prophet Isaiah, who lived in Hezekiah's days, a century and a half before the time of Cyrus, were actually written by a much later prophet, towards the end of the Babylonish Captivity, and when the forces of Cyrus, after many great victories, were marching in triumph against Babylon itself.

But not only in this way are many passages of the Hebrew Scriptures, which were once regarded as clear predictions of events yet future, shown now to refer to events already past,—but we find a number of quotations from the ancient prophets applied in the New Testament, by a sort of accommodation very common among the devout Jews of that age, to the case of the Messiah, which never could have been originally intended to be referred to him, though the language used admitted of being adapted to some portion of our Saviour's history. This is notoriously the case very frequently in the Gospel of St Matthew, to which the divine, whom I have just quoted, expressly refers. Hosea, for instance, says in one place—

‘When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt’—

where the words ‘my son’ refer plainly—like ‘the servant of Jehovah’ in the later Isaiah—to Israel. But this is quoted in St Matthew's Gospel as follows, with reference to the descent of Joseph and Mary, with the Infant Jesus, into Egypt:—

‘Then he arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son.’’

Jeremiah, again, describes the devastation of the land of Israel at the time of the Babylonish Captivity; he tells us how—

‘A voice was heard in Rama, lamentation and bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children—[the mother, as it were, weeping for her children, Ephraim, and Manasseh, and the prophet's own be-

loved tribe of Benjamin, who had all been cut off by the sword, or carried away into captivity]—refused to be comforted for her children because they were not.’

And the evangelist, as before, applies these words to a totally different subject—to the account which he gives of the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem, and he applies them very forcibly, if we regard them merely as expressing in striking language—not as actually predicting—the circumstances of that event. And, perhaps, this is all which the writer himself meant by saying ‘Thus it was fulfilled’—just as we in our day should say, ‘Then might you have seen a complete illustration of that which the prophet of old described, when speaking of events which happened in his own time.’ And, as the learned Prebendary has said, ‘these examples are by no means exceptional.’ There are a number of other instances, where the prophetic passage from the Old Testament is connected with the event referred to it in the New, only by some apparent suitability in the language, which is used in the one case to express the fact recorded in the other.

But, however this may be, whatever direct predictions of future events may be found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, there is one sense, and a most important one, in which they do contain very largely prognostications of the future, by announcing in plain terms the general principles by which the Divine Government of man is guided. This was what the Deuteronomist meant when he makes Moses speak of Jehovah raising up a ‘prophet from among their brethren like unto himself,’ after his death,—by which he meant a series of prophets in different ages to carry on the work which he had begun. For in the words ascribed to Moses there is very little of direct prediction of future events. Moses appears as a lawgiver and teacher in God’s Name, and but little as a prognosticator of the future, except indeed in this very Book of Deuteronomy, written after the captivity of Israel, and when that of Judah was near at hand, and is announced beforehand as the just punishment of their offences. But the work of Moses generally, as a Prophet, was that of speaking God’s words to them, of instructing, admonishing, exhorting, or comforting. And such will be the great work of the true prophet of God in every age,—not to

meddle with the details of the future for the gratification of an idle curiosity,—not merely to prognosticate, but to teach,—to tell God's people their sins, and the consequences which those sins will entail,—to tell them of God's Love, and the blessedness of living as His dear obedient children,—to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and comfort, from the experience of the past, and the deep conviction wrought into his own being by the power of the Divine Teacher. It was for this principally that God sent His prophets of old, and that He sends them still. Still by the lips of our fellow-men—chiefly, perhaps, in these days, by their writings—does the Great Educator of mankind carry on His work. The eternal principles of truth and right are fixed; and the prophets have the power and the duty committed to them, on behalf of their brethren, to bring out into clear light those principles, and apply them to the passing circumstances of the present day.

Thus the idea, which is commonly entertained, that the main office of prophecy was to foretell the future, and that this is one of the great guarantees of the truth of revelation, has an underlying stratum of fact, which has been distorted into a superstitious falsehood. It is true, as one says, that—

Old experience doth attain  
To something of prophetic strain—

that the death-beds of sages and saints, when the mind has been clear to the last, have been often oracular,—not only that the lips of the departing have been overflowing with heavenly wisdom, but that the raised state of the faculties, which is sometimes granted, gives such an insight into the hearts and characters of those around, as amounts almost to a foretelling of their destiny. And so, too, in the divinely-ordained teachers of a nation, since 'that, which has been, shall be,' the deep love of their country, by which such as these have been distinguished, has given them a *feeling from afar* of the evils hanging over their land, the necessary fruits, the natural consequences, of the sins of their countrymen: while their strong faith in the 'God of their fathers,' in His Patience with all, in His Love to the remnant who obeyed and trusted in Him, has made clear to them, even through the overhanging clouds, the light of a future deliverance, when the Lord should

have purged out the sins of His people, by a spirit of judgment, a spirit of burning. It was thus that the Prophet, in the last chapter of the Book of Isaiah, sees at one time 'Jehovah's servant,' Israel,—

'despised and rejected,' 'wounded and bruised,' 'plague-stricken and smitten of God,' 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;—

or in the next chapter changes the metaphor, and speaks of Jehovah as the 'Husband,' not the 'Master,' of Israel, and of Israel as a wife 'barren and desolate'—

'as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.'

But he can see in faith the future hope of Israel—its coming brightness and glory, when the present affliction shall have done its work upon it. He can predict that the 'righteous servant' of Jehovah—

'shall see his seed, shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.'

He can promise that the afflicted wife, 'tossed with tempest and not comforted,' though 'forsaken for a small moment,' in God's own time, 'with great mercies shall be gathered'; he can soothe her by saying in her Husband's Name,—

'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer.'

But, as I said on Good Friday, such words as these apply not only to Israel, with reference to whom they were first spoken, but to us also, to all 'Jehovah's servants' in every age, and above all to him, the Son of Man, who is the type and example of all. So 'the Prophet,' promised in Deuteronomy, may be regarded as a prediction of Christ. It is in this way that the whole Bible is full of predictions of Christ, that the Scriptures everywhere testify of him, as the great exemplar of the true and faithful—the true sons of God—in every age, struggling with the sins, suffering with the sorrows, bearing the burdens, of their time.

And this may be the meaning of the expression in the text that 'no prophecy of Scripture is of any *private* interpretation.' They are not to be *confined* to particular events and individual cases—but are applicable generally,—if not in the letter, at least in the spirit,—to all times and to all circumstances, where men—created to be God's servants, rather, His children—are, like Israel of old, living so as



either to please or to grieve His Holy Spirit. We know, indeed, how the Divine character of the Scriptures has been distorted into superstitious notions concerning them. It argues, of course, a want of capacity for apprehending and appreciating what is truly Divine, when its presence is made a pretence for worshipping the human or earthly shrine in which it dwells. The many languages of the Earth are, indeed, one providential antidote to this tendency towards worshipping the mere letter of the Bible. Yet they have not hindered that letter from being used by many, at least in our land, magically, as charms and amulets are used, as means of divining or foretelling the details of events in the histories of nations or the lives of individuals.

But, as I have said, not only in Scripture do we find the language of prophecy—but out of Scripture also, and in the utterances of living men in all times. The great poets of an age have often been its prophets—were always meant to be so; and St Paul calls the Cretan poet, who spoke the truth about his countrymen, ‘a prophet of their own,’—for so it reads in the original Greek, where the English version translates ‘one of their own poets.’ And great preachers also are the prophets of God, and statesmen, and orators, who hold their fellow-men in rapt admiration of their eloquence and power of speech. The gifts of deep feeling and clear strong utterance mostly go together: though in some, who possess the former, the latter is comparatively wanting; the prophet’s lips must be touched with sacred fire. How miraculous his words then appear to the hearer! How wonderful is that gift of eloquence, which has carried whole crowds and masses of men on the breath of one! While God has made, and can make, even ‘babes and sucklings’ to show forth His praise, shall we not give Him glory, when He uses more powerful instruments, whose power and perfection are equally His work?

The historian, too, who teaches us the results of experience in the history of the past, and from the past foresees the future—the man of science, who unfolds to us the mysteries of Nature’s Laws—these too are God’s prophets, and we must hear their voice. The knowledge, indeed, of God’s works and laws in Nature is the fruit of patient

inquiry, of diligent observation and comparison; we do not speak of it as given by inspiration; it may seem as if such utterances came 'by the will of man.' And yet the leaders of the now vast army of the students of Nature have received from time to time, as it were, in flashes of Divine illumination from the 'Father of Lights,' the knowledge of those laws which have made of a mass of detached incoherent facts an orderly universe of knowledge.

But the knowledge of God's laws in nature, which is given in our age, was not vouchsafed to the prophets of old. They had another and a yet higher and more needful office—to speak in the ears of men those holy laws of conduct, of feeling towards both God and Man, to which the heart answers when they reach the ear,—to throw the light of another mind upon the writing of the conscience,—to clothe in burning words the devout aspirations of the soul towards the Fountain of its life,—those aspirations and desires, which are the promise and pledge of their own fulfilment, as He is True, from whom they came, to whom they tend. These are the 'holy men,' who spake of old, and speak at all times, 'as men moved by the Holy Ghost.' The Divine Spirit uses them as His instruments for enlightening and quickening the hearts of their fellow-men; and the very imperfection of His instruments serves only to show the Great Instructor's skill. How often by the simple tale or homely sermon has a truth or, better still, has the Love of God been carried home to the heart of the still simpler reader! How often even will a pious soul find food for holy thought in the barest common-places! Even by such as these 'hath the Lord spoken.' But when the great poet or thinker commands the hearts and minds of his age, clothing old doctrines in new and living forms, tracking truth into some of her innermost and most sacred recesses, who would dare to ascribe such truly Divine powers to any but the 'Father of Lights, the Giver of every good and perfect gift'? Who would not take courage in the assurance, that the Voice of God is still to be heard in His Great Universal Church, and say with filial reverence, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth'?

No! brethren—not by the 'will of man' in olden times did prophecy come, nor does it come thus in the days in

which we live. A man writes or speaks from many motives—perhaps, from the best, or from a pressure of the subject on his spirit, which seems more like compulsion than motive. But whether freely, or on compulsion, whether with or without motive, the work must be done. ‘A dispensation of the Spirit is committed unto him.’ And the same Divine Power takes home the words uttered to the heart of the receiver, and they become light and life and strength and wisdom to his soul,—sometimes, alas! while the utterer himself remains dark and cold and dead, because of unfaithfulness to his own gifts.

Ah! yes, there may be unfaithful prophets, speaking like Balaam, of whom we heard last Sunday, words of truth in God’s Name, yet themselves loving all the while the works of darkness,—as the writer of this epistle himself describes them—

‘wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.’

In those days, doubtless, there were persons well known, to whom such words as these were specially applicable, of whom he says—

‘When they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.’

But in every age experience tells us there will be those who, while preaching to others, will be in danger themselves of being cast away,—who may be made the messengers of God’s Mercy to others, may have been the means of saving them, and yet may have lost themselves the way of life. There may be men of genius richly endowed,—poets, philosophers, statesmen, men of science,—ay, and preachers of righteousness also, gifted with a prophet’s eloquence,—who, having ministered their choice gifts to others, have fallen short themselves of the Kingdom of God.

May God in His Mercy preserve us from any such misery, proportioned to the gifts which we ourselves possess, as stewards of the manifold Grace of God! For let us not forget that we are *all* bound to minister one to another. ‘Are all apostles? are all prophets?’ No! not in the higher sense of these words. It is not within the power of any one to fill at his pleasure the chair of the teacher of

men,—to speak as the ‘oracles of God’ to his brethren. It is a gift, to be used humbly, indeed, reverently, conscientiously ; but it is not conferred in a high degree on all—in a high degree, so as to make all prophets. But to *bear witness for the truth* is imperative on all who know the truth,—at least not by silence, when occasion offers, to acquiesce in a lie, to leave to it that strength which our contradiction would have helped to withdraw from it. In a lower sense, each in our measure, we *are* to be ‘apostles,’ that is, messengers, and ‘prophets,’ that is, utterers, of God’s Will one to another. We are to ‘consider one another daily, to provoke unto love and good works’ ; we are to comfort and support one another ; we are to speak to one another the truth in love. The gift of light and life, which one has received, he must impart to his brother, and share his brother’s gift in return. For ‘the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal’ ;—

‘And there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord ; and there are diversities of operations ; but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.’

## XX.

### PROPHECY AND PROGNOSTICATION.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 6, 1866.

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MATT. IV. 14—16.

‘THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET, SAYING, THE LAND OF ZABULON AND THE LAND OF NEPHTHALIM, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES; THE PEOPLE WHICH SAT IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND TO THEM WHICH SAT IN THE REGION AND SHADOW OF DEATH LIGHT IS SPRUNG UP.’

HERE is an instance of the kind to which I referred in my discourse of last Sunday Evening, where the writer of the Gospel narrative,—whether Matthew himself, in those notes of his which furnished, it would seem, the ground-work of the present Gospel, or more probably the unknown compiler, to whom we owe it as it now lies before us,—has quoted the language of some ancient prophecy, as singularly applicable to the later event which he is engaged in describing. And this, in fact, as I explained, is the highest characteristic of true prophecy, that it is ‘not of any private interpretation;’ it cannot be restricted to the age or to the event, with reference to which it may have been originally uttered; it is an utterance of Divine Truth, of the Living Word of God, which in its essential character is applicable to all times, which is no mere prognostic, foretelling some particular event in the history of one person or one people, but contains eternal truth for all ages, the result of deep insight into human nature, and into the dealings of God with man, His child, in the past. In this way prophecy is a proof to us of the existence of a Living God, of One who was and is the God of our fathers, as He is now our God,—a proof that one and the self-same Spirit

is in all ages teaching the spirits of men,—a proof that the human race, amidst all external differences of time and place and circumstances, is yet essentially the same, its relations to the Divine Creator the same, its hopes and fears, its longings and desires, its needs and its experiences, the same substantially, in the ages long ago as now. Then, as now, the ‘holy men of old,’ the prophets, or preachers of God’s Word, ‘spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ Then, as now, God’s Word came home with power to the hearts of men, was felt to be the truth, bore its own witness to the conscience, and was to some ‘a savour of death unto death,’ to others ‘a savour of life unto life.’

This power of prophecy, appearing in single individuals and often in dark times, has, in fact, surprised the hearers—at least the more devout among them—into a confession of a present Divinity. Such living words, such clear insight justified by the event, seemed to them to prove the presence of something more than human, of a knowledge beyond what belonged to the mere creature of a day,—one who, as the Psalmist says, ‘cometh up as a flower and is cut down,’ who ‘fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.’ Yet is Man justly described as a creature that ‘looks before and after;’ and we shall find that, as the past is his inheritance, so is the future also. It would not be so if we were living in a Universe, which was governed by a capricious and changeable being, instead of by Jehovah, the Living God, ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’ The progress of the race, the advancement in science of every kind, the study of philosophy, the results of experience, would not then bring Man nearer to a knowledge of the course of nature or of human history. Of such a Being, *miracle*, as it is popularly understood, would be the only, as it would be the fitting, manifestation. We should be living in the realm of naked Will, and God would be known as Will alone, as irresistible, incomprehensible, Sovereignty.

But it is not so. The Father of spirits—the Father of all—reveals Himself by His Word to our hearts and minds as the Fountain of Law—as the *Holy Will* in the *spiritual* world, in the *sensible* world as the author of this stupendous, yet most beautiful and orderly, Universe. In this

latter world of sense, as we know, His children, enlightened by Him, by virtue of those faculties with which He has gifted them, and in accordance therefore with their Creator's Will, have made acquaintance with the laws of the innumerable orbs of space, and are able to foretell with certainty their motions for a far-distant future. The miraculous portents of former ages have become for us the most regular and orderly events in nature: the comets and eclipses, which struck terror into the nations of old, which frighten the ignorant and superstitious now, are familiar and foreseen by the astronomer of the 19th century. But these prophecies of Science—the truths and lessons which she teaches—are ‘not of any private interpretation.’ The sun does not veil his face in disastrous gloom with special reference to any one person, or foretell a time of woe to one particular nation, as men used to suppose. The aspects of the heavens are not partial, as astrology vainly deemed; nor are the fates of individual men, princes or heroes, written upon the starry skies, so as to be deciphered there. Whatever lessons are taught by the course of events in the natural world, we now know that they are meant for us *all*,—that they unfold to us more and more of those unchanging laws, by which the whole universe is governed. Even the lower heavens, the world of clouds and winds, which seem so irregular and capricious, are in these days more and more distinctly seen to be subject to Law; the predictions of the barometer and thermometer cannot be neglected with impunity; and the weather-prophet, although he cannot speak with the certainty of the *Almanac*, can yet give advice to the sailor and the husbandman, which they do well not to despise.

But these prophecies, in the realm of nature, are *general* in their application; they are ‘not of any private interpretation;’ they are meant for all. The careful and experienced farmer may know enough about the meteorology of his own district and the quality of his own land, to foretell the crops, and to wait upon and watch for the seasons. He may use such knowledge wisely and well to his own advantage. But no knowledge that he can thus acquire, will merely of itself bring more profit to *him* than to his neighbour, or be in the nature of a prognostication of his own peculiar private fortunes. Thus the soothsaying, con-

juring, and foretelling of past generations have been transfigured into an increased acquaintance with the laws of God in nature, available to the wise, the diligent, and the patient,—elevating, instead of degrading, to humanity, and therefore more honourable to God.

It is a great thing thus to feel—and, thank God! it is the growing feeling of our age—that the whole Universe is under Law to God,—that nothing happens by chance under His Government, nothing at random, nothing by arbitrary interference, nothing but what might be expected from the regular and constant action of His own orderly, eternal, laws,—and to feel that the same thing also is true in the *moral* world—that sin will inevitably be followed with bitter consequences, and that, amidst all present trials and perplexities, ‘light is certainly sown for the righteous, and joyful gladness for such as are true of heart.’ It is a great thing to realize the truth of those words, which were uttered two thousand years ago by a Roman prophet—I mean the great orator and philosopher, Cicero, who wrote as follows :—

Law, properly understood, is no other than Right Reason, agreeing with nature, spread abroad among all men, ever consistent with itself, eternal, whose office it is to summon to duty by its commands, to deter from vice by its prohibitions,—which, however, to the good never commands or forbids in vain, never influences the wicked either by commanding or forbidding. In contradiction to this Law nothing can be laid down, nor does it admit of partial or entire repeal. Nor can we be released from this Law either by vote of the Senate or decree of the people. Nor does it require any commentator or interpreter besides itself. Nor will there be one Law at Athens, and another at Rome, one now, and another hereafter; but one eternal, immutable Law will both embrace all nations and at all times. And there will be one common Master, as it were, and Ruler of all, namely, God, the Great Originator, Expositor, Enactor, of this Law; which Law whosoever will not obey, will be flying from himself, and, having treated with contempt his human nature, will in that very fact pay the greatest penalty, even if he shall escape other punishments, as they are commonly considered.

If, indeed, we turn from nature, where all is obedience and submission,—where ‘the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork,’—where ‘fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm, fulfil His word,’—where the earth, which He ‘hung upon nothing,’ ‘abideth’ even as ‘He established it,’—where, as



the ancient writer in Genesis, with a sure trust in the faithfulness of God, foretold,—

‘while the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, do not cease,’—

if we turn, I say, from these things to the world of men’s doings, which we call History, all seems at first comparatively confusion, man rebelling against the laws of his being, ‘destroying himself’ and his kind, and needing all the terrible discipline, of which the suffering and sorrows of countless generations are the fruit,—a discipline which yet seems often to fall blindly, and to destroy the righteous with the wicked. And we may be tempted at times to yield in despair to the fearful thought, that the Judge of all the earth will *not* do right, that His dealings with Man are not equal, that we shall not be able to trace the Law in the Moral world, and predict the future from the past.

But no! amidst the infinite confusions, which the perversity of human wills has introduced, we believe in a kingdom of God set up in the moral and spiritual world, as orderly and sure as that which we are certain now exists in the natural world. That kingdom, indeed, as our Lord has said, ‘cometh not with observation,’—cometh not with pomp and show, and outward signs, and visible demonstrations of its Presence. Yet the principles of it, as St Paul says, are written in the hearts of all men, ‘their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another’—are written not with ink, but with the finger of the Living God. There is a Divine Law, which when brought home to us by the Word of God, we feel at once to be ‘holy, just, and good,’ that Law which reigns in the Universe of moral being, and binds us to our Creator, in whose image we are made, and binds us all to one another—with respect to which, as Richard Hooker says—

There can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both Angels and Men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent admiring her as the Mother of their peace and joy.

The *power*, in fact, of the Creator has extended to the production of creatures with *wills*, to be conformed, *but by*

*their own act*, to His perfect Will. His *Wisdom* is displayed in overruling the results of the acting of these wills during their imperfect state, so as to bring order out of confusion, peace and love out of strife and selfishness, by orderly ways, however inscrutable to us, which we may hope in a more perfect state to trace and adore. But this, at least, we can see even here, that, if the fate of any individual *could* be shown to him beforehand,—if he could be certain to reap every material advantage, and to attain the goods of this world, its wealth and power, by the exercise of virtue,—there would be no room for virtue to exist at all—the taunt of the old Satan would then be unanswerable, ‘Doth Job serve God for nought?’

But, as in some work of art too close a view shows only confusion, while at the true focus every touch and stroke, every seemingly fortuitous light or shadow, contributes to one perfect and harmonious result, so shall it be when we reach that heavenly height, to which our souls aspire. And even here, in an inferior degree but not less truly, to those who are raised above their brethren, by longer experience,—to those who are gifted with deeper insight, with that keen spiritual vision, which is granted to some beyond others for the sake of all,—the maze of Providence becomes by glimpses clear, the ‘Arm of the Lord is made bare,’ the Lord is seen to ‘execute judgment’; while the ‘path of the just,’ though perhaps to the traveller himself it may be shrouded for a time in darkness, is beheld by such ‘prophets’ as a shining light, ‘shining more and more unto the perfect day.’

Such is the nature of most of the prophecies contained in the Old Testament, and, in fact, of the Sacred Writings generally, which, as one has wisely observed (S. T. Coleridge), are ‘everywhere prophecy, nowhere prognostication.’ On this view they prove themselves to be indeed Divinely inspired. All through them we see the Lord ‘sitting above the waterfloods, remaining a King for ever,’ holding the hearts of kings in His hands, making the wrath of man to praise Him, pleading the cause of the helpless. ‘Fear not,’ said Joseph in the story to his brethren, ‘ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive.’ Hence the constant exhortations in the Scriptures to ‘wait patiently on

God,' to leave our cause in His hands ; hence the frequent assurance that, though lying lips may prevail for a moment, yet 'the lip of truth shall be established,'—that, though we may have to suffer for a time, when our hearts condemn us not for any evil, when we are conscious only of having done to the best of our power that which we believe to be right and good and true, yet in God's time, which is the best, we shall be delivered,—though now 'sitting in darkness,' as the text says, we shall 'see a great light.'

This does not warrant our folding our hands in indolence. As in higher matters we are to 'work out our own salvation' because God worketh in us, so in things less vital, but still important to us, in trouble or perplexity of mind, in painful and embarrassing circumstances, it is our duty and privilege first to do our part, and then to take no thought for the morrow, leaving results in the hand of God. We know how the consciousness of something being inevitable, of escape from it being impossible, acts like an opiate upon all the passionate struggles of our nature. But, as Christians, let us add to this the devout confession, that this inevitable blow, which seems such a calamity, is directed by the hand of a Father, whose Wisdom and Love are infinite—

whose authority, in show  
When most severe, and mustering all its force,  
Is but the *graver countenance of Love*,—  
Whose favour like the clouds of spring may lour,  
And utter now and then an awful voice,  
But has a blessing in its darkest frown,  
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.

There is nothing like this habitual reference of all events to the overruling Providence of a Father, for inducing this patient hopeful temper. In the case of a conqueror or hero, a confidence in his own destiny, a belief that there is something bright and peculiar in his 'star,' has often strengthened his hands, and delivered him from the vacillations and doubts and terrors, which might have ruined the cause of ordinary men. So a filial trust in the Great God may raise the Christian man, who is not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, to a position in which he may be a leader and a support to many. 'In quietness

and confidence must be our strength.' Our troubles, as well as our joys, being part of the discipline of our lives, are but short, as is fitting for such frail and short-lived creatures. This is but a common-place, indeed, which reappears in innumerable proverbs and proverbial phrases, hardly worthy to be repeated here. But it becomes a living truth, and heartfelt, when we ascribe it to the ordinance of our Heavenly Father.

I have made these remarks generally with reference to the prophecies and promises of Scripture; but they are specially applicable to the text before us, where words of Isaiah are quoted, in which the prophet originally foretold a gleam of glorious light for his afflicted people, when the judgment of God shall have done its work upon them:—

'The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.'

To various memorable occasions in the history of the Jews, and in that of the Church, may these words be applied, as well as to circumstances of daily occurrence in the lives of individuals. In the New Testament they are quoted as illustrating the time when the great light of our Saviour's Teaching began to shine upon the world, still lying in comparative darkness. In the text itself they are employed with reference to that great salvation, which the prophet expected in his own time from some other Deliverer, who should come to 'sit upon the throne of David,'—

'to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice henceforth and for ever.'

We will examine this morning more closely the sense in which this prophecy was originally uttered, reserving for the evening the further consideration of the subject.

There is no doubt that it refers primarily to the time when the king of Assyria had already invaded, and was again about to invade, the land of the Ten Tribes, which formed what is called in Scripture the kingdom of Israel in distinction from the kingdom of Judah. We read in the Book of Kings, 2K.xvi.5-9, that—

'Rezin, king of Syria, [whose capital was Damascus,] and Pekah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz, [king of Judah,] but could not overcome. . . . And Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son; come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. . . . And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him; for the king of Assyria

went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.'

Such was the fate of Syria and Damascus. As for Israel, we are told that the same king of Assyria took several of its towns, 'and Gilead, and Galilee, all the towns of Naphthali, and carried them captive to Assyria.' 2K.xv.29. It is plainly to this event that reference is made in the first verse of the 9th chapter of Isaiah, from which the writer in St Matthew has quoted a portion, as applicable to the days of our Lord's ministry. The prophet writes—

'Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted *the land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphthalim*, and afterward did more grievously afflict *by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles*.'

The evangelist has selected, as I have said, only a portion of this verse, as suitable for his present purpose—viz. the description of the locality concerned—

'the land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.'

He does not quote the prophet's account of the disasters which had befallen this part of the land. And, indeed, it is not easy to say what exactly Isaiah does mean in this verse. It reads intelligibly enough in the English version: but the original is perplexed and obscure; and the best commentators are very doubtful as to the true interpretation of the passage. On this point only they seem to be generally agreed, that the English Version does *not* give here a correct translation of the original Hebrew. This, however, does not affect the general meaning of the prophecy. For, whatever may be the exact sense of the prophet's words in this first verse, it is certain that he makes some reference in it to the affliction which these northern districts of Palestine had suffered from the Assyrians. And he then goes on to promise them light in their darkness, and deliverance at last from these troubles, when the yoke of the oppressor should be broken, and all Israel—the northern, as well as the southern, tribes—should be gathered once more, as he hoped, in one glorious Kingdom, under the rule of a prince of the seed of David.

'The people that were walking in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
The dwellers in the land of the shadow of death—  
Light hath beamed upon them.

Thou hast multiplied the nation ;  
 For it hast thou increased the joy ;  
 They joy before Thee as with the joy in harvest,  
 As (men) rejoice at their dividing the spoil,  
 For the yoke of his burden,  
 And the staff of his shoulder,  
 The rod of his oppressor,  
 Thou hast broken, as in the day of Midian.  
 For every boot of the booted (warrior) in the tumult,  
 And the mantle rolled in blood,  
 Shall be for burning, food for fire.'

These last words are a more correct translation of the original than that which you would find in the English Bible, where we read,—

'For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood : but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.'

The prophet, however, means to foretell that a time of peace and quietness shall come, when, as he says elsewhere,—

'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
 And their spears into pruning-hooks ;  
 Nation shall not lift sword against nation,  
 Neither shall they learn war any more.'

And this idea he expresses here by saying that the warriors' boots, and their blood-stained cloaks, should be piled in heaps and burnt, as the common practice was after a great victory. Thus in Ps.xlvi.9 we read—

'He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth ;  
 He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ;  
 He burneth the chariot in the fire :'

and yet more distinctly in Ez.xxxix.9—

'And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the javelins and the spears ; and they shall kindle a fire with them seven years.'

In the text, however, the reference is made not merely to the destruction of Israel's enemies, especially the Assyrian, whose 'rod' Jehovah would break 'as in the day of Midian,' against whom 'the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge, according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb,' x.26—but to the permanent establishment of peace under the powerful reign of the expected prince of the family of David. Thus the prophet Zechariah describes the same glorious time as a time of settled peace, when the

arms of war should be 'cut off' from 'Ephraim' and from 'Jerusalem':—

'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold! thy king cometh unto thee;  
He is just, and having salvation,  
Meek, and riding upon an ass,  
Even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.  
And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,  
And the horse from Jerusalem;  
And the battle-bow shall be cut off;  
And he shall speak peace unto the heathen;  
And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea,  
And from the river even to the ends of the earth.' ix.9,10.

And so Micah says, speaking of the same brilliant time, for which so many pious hearts in Israel were devoutly longing:—

'It shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots.'

In the words which I have just quoted from Zechariah, you recognize, no doubt, some which are also applied in the Gospels to the history of Jesus, when once he entered Jerusalem in triumph, seated upon an ass;—

'And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying,  
'Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!''

But, though it is true, no doubt, that many such passages in the ancient prophets, which predict the glorious time of the expected 'son of David,' may be applied to the facts of our Lord's history, they cannot *all* be so applied. And it is plain that the prophets themselves looked for a prince of earthly mould, whose kingdom should 'come with observation,' who should be clothed with royal pomp and power, and set his throne, like that of his father David, above all other thrones, and his people above the surrounding nations. Thus Micah speaks of the time of the king as a time of 'peace,' indeed, but of peace maintained by the strong arm of power; he declares that the war-horse and the chariot shall be cut off out of Israel; but he says also—

'The remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.' v.8,9.

And so he says of the same great prince,—

'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the ruler in Israel. . . . And he shall be the peace, *when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof.* Thus shall he *deliver us from the Assyrians*, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.'

And, indeed, the passage in Zechariah, which is supposed by many to predict the *humility* of Christ's character, because it speaks of him as riding on an ass, was not so intended by the original writer. He meant to describe thereby the *calm* and *quietness* which would prevail under the reign of this son of David, but at the same time to express the solemn *dignity*, the mild *majesty*, of His government. 'Speak, ye that *ride on white asses*,' says Deborah to the judges of Israel, Ju.v.10. The thirty sons of Jair '*rode on thirty ass-colts* and had thirty cities,' Ju.x.4; and the forty sons and thirty grandsons of another judge in Israel '*rode on three-score and ten ass-colts*,' Ju.xii.14. Balaam, we remember, rode upon an ass; Absalom and the rest of David's sons rode upon mules, 2S.xiii.29,xviii.9, and David himself had his own royal mules, especially known as such, 1Ki.i.33,38,44. And, in fact, until Solomon's time, when horses were imported from Egypt, and were then used principally for war-purposes, they were but little employed in Israel; and, accordingly, we are told of overseers being placed over David's 'herds,' and 'camels,' and 'asses,' and 'sheep,' 1Ch.xxvii.29-31, but nothing is said about his *horses*. I will quote what is said on this point in the *Dictionary of the Bible*, III.p.xviii:—

It is almost needless to observe that the ass in eastern countries is a very different animal from what he is in western Europe. *There* the greatest care is taken of the animal, and much attention is paid to cultivate the breed by crossing the finest specimens. The riding on the ass, therefore, conveys a very different notion from the one which attaches to such a mode of conveyance in our own country. The most noble and honourable among the Jews were wont to be mounted on asses; and in this manner our Lord himself made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He came, indeed, 'meek and lowly'; but it is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that the fact of his riding on the ass, according to our English ideas, had ought to do with his meekness: although thereby, doubtless, he meant to show the peaceable nature of his kingdom, as horses were used only for war-purposes.

I repeat, then, the ancient prophets, in predicting the coming of a king, 'the son of David,' did not themselves



foresee that spiritual king, the true son of David, whose word has subdued the stubborn heart, whose Divine Teaching has been 'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel.' They looked only for a temporal deliverer, who should 'break the yoke of his burden' for Israel, 'and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor.' They looked for a peaceful and glorious king, as Solomon the son of David was pictured of old, whose throne should be established in righteousness, and endure 'unto all generations,'—

'of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever.'

This was the king to whom Isaiah's words directly pointed, when he said in the words of the text—

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death—upon them hath the light shined ;'

and when he said, in those other well-known words which follow the text, and which we will consider this evening—

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'

## XXI.

### LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 6, 1866.

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ISAIAH IX. 2.

'THE PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT;  
THEY THAT DWELL IN THE LAND OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH—UPON  
THEM HATH THE LIGHT SHINED!'

I SPOKE this morning of the circumstances to which these words of the text more directly applied—to which they were meant to apply by the prophet who uttered them. The forces of the king of Assyria had ravaged the northern portions of Palestine, 'the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea [of Gennesareth], and beyond the Jordan,'—the district which was called 'Galilee of the Gentiles,' that is, 'the circle of the nations,' from the number of Gentiles who dwelt within its border, and from the close connection of its inhabitants, generally, with the heathen peoples who lived beyond them. The condition of the country and the blank despair of its occupants, under these dire visitations,—some of which had already taken place, while others were threatened,—are strikingly described in the words just before the text:—

'And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God—[that is, shall curse Jehovah, their Divine King]—and they shall look upward, and they shall look upon the earth; and behold trouble and gloom, dimness of anguish! and they shall be driven into darkness.' viii. 21, 22.

Yet the prophet sees an end of all this misery, and exclaims in the language of the text—

'The people that were walking in darkness have seen a great light!

They that were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death—upon them hath the light shined!’

He beholds in prophetic vision the nation ‘multiplied,’ and its joy ‘increased,’ like the joy of harvest or of those who divide the spoil. He declares that Jehovah has broken the heavy yoke which the people has had to bear, the staff that was laid upon their shoulder, the ‘rod’ wherewith the Assyrian oppressed them, and that henceforth a calm and settled peace should prevail, and all the fierce and bloody panoply of war be burnt in the fire. I showed, by quotations from other prophecies, as those of Micah and Zechariah, that such language was commonly used to express the peaceful character of that glorious time, for which so many pious hearts were longing, when the king, the son of David, should be born, and restore the golden age to Israel,—when, as Isaiah says elsewhere,—

‘There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,  
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots;  
And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,  
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The spirit of counsel and might,  
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah . . . .  
And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,  
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.  
The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,  
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little child shall lead them.  
And the cow and the bear shall feed;  
Their young ones shall lie down together;  
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,  
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den.  
They shall not hurt nor destroy,  
In all my holy mountain;  
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,  
As the waters cover the sea.’ xi.1-9.

Many of these prophetic expressions are, no doubt, applicable to the kingdom of God, which Christ came to set up on earth,—that spiritual kingdom of ‘love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,’ of which the most glorious and happy times under human governments are faint forthshadowings. But they cannot all be thus applied. I instanced this in the passages which I quoted this morning from

Micah, where the promise of this peaceful king is coupled with the assurance of great temporal glory and might reserved for Israel—

‘And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.’

Upon such prophecies as these, interpreted in their own peculiar way, the ‘saints’ in Cromwell’s time rested their claim to ‘tread down and tear in pieces,’ to ‘execute vengeance in anger and fury’ upon those whom they were pleased to call the ‘heathen.’ I showed how the meaning of Zechariah’s famous prophecy of the ‘meek’ king of Israel ‘riding upon an ass,’ was misunderstood by many, as if the riding on such an animal implied in Eastern countries, what it might in ours, humility and degradation, instead of merely the mildness of his government, the peaceful quiet of his reign. But in all these cases, I said, the prophets themselves had no idea, apparently, of that spiritual kingdom, to which their utterances were in later days applied. They were thinking only of a great temporal deliverance, temporal glory, temporal blessings, for Israel—a reign of confirmed peace and surpassing glory, under a powerful and vigorous, yet meek and gentle, just and virtuous, prince of David’s line:—

‘He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,  
Neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;  
But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,  
And reprove with equity for the meek of the earth;  
And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.’

And so, that same day, in which this ‘rod shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse’ and this ‘branch grow out of his roots,’ is described immediately as a day of triumphant return to their own land for the scattered remnant of Israel and Judah:—

‘And it shall come to pass *in that day*,  
That Jehovah shall set His hand again the second time,  
To recover the remnant of his people which shall be left,  
From Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros,  
And from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar,  
And from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. . . .  
And they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west;  
They shall spoil the children of the East together;

They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab,  
 And the children of Ammon shall obey them ;  
 And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea ;  
 And with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river,  
 And shall smite it in the seven streams,  
 And make men go over dryshod.  
 And there shall be an highway from Assyria,  
 For the remnant of His people which shall be left ;  
 Like as it was to Israel in the day  
 That he came up out of the land of Egypt.'

Thus the prophet is plainly speaking of ancient Egypt and Assyria, and not of the state of things in the time of Christ ; for the Assyrian empire was overthrown six centuries before the birth of Christ, and Herodotus, writing two hundred years afterwards, speaks of the Tigris as ' the river upon which the town of Nineveh *formerly* stood.' Although, therefore, there are expressions in these prophecies, which, picked out and detached from the context, may be and are applied to the times of Christ, yet, it is plain, they were not originally written with this object ; they refer directly to the state of things in Israel and Judah in the prophet's own lifetime ; and the king, the son of David, of whom they speak, was in Isaiah's view expected to be raised up of that royal line, in order to free the land from the oppression of the Assyrian king.

And this is also true of that prophecy of which the text forms a part, and one verse of which I reserved for further consideration this evening. It is that passage so well known to us by the glorious music, with which it is linked in the greatest work of one of our greatest composers, the Messiah of Handel :—

' For unto us a child is born,  
 Unto us a son is given ;  
 And the government shall be upon his shoulder ;  
 And his name shall be called Wonderful,  
 Counsellor, the Mighty God,  
 The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'

So accustomed are we to hear these words applied to the birth of Christ, that it has scarcely occurred to us, perhaps, to ask if they ever were meant to have—if they ever could have had—another reference. And yet the context, which speaks of the ' rod of Israel's oppressor being broken, as in the day of Midian,' will remind us that here also we have to do with those present realities, which belonged to the

actual condition of Israel at the time when the prophet was writing. Accordingly, if we turn to the Greek (Septuagint) translation of this passage,—made nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ, and therefore not to be suspected of any anti-Christian tendency,—we find the original Hebrew rendered as follows :—

‘For unto us a child was born, unto us a son was given, and the government was placed upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called messenger (angel) of great counsel; for I will bring peace unto the rulers and health to him.’

This, however, is what is found in one copy of the Greek manuscript. In another the last words are—

‘and his name shall be called Angel of great counsel, Admirable, Counsellor, Mighty, Strong-One, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come: for I will bring peace and health.’

The Latin Version has also ‘Father of the Future age,’ instead of ‘the Everlasting Father,’ as our English Bibles translate it. And, indeed, it is obvious, on a moment’s consideration, that this latter expression could hardly be applied with propriety to Christ: while ‘Father of the age to come’ might well be used of a pious prince, who should restore the land to its ancient prosperity, and rule it in righteousness,—as well as of him whose teaching has made all things bright for us, who has ‘brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.’ It is probable, however, that the Hebrew expression should rather be translated ‘the *perpetual* Father,’ who should stand, like the everlasting hills, the firm and constant protector and guardian of his people.

In both the Greek translations, however, you will see the phrase the ‘Mighty God’ has disappeared altogether. In the first of them, it is plain that the Hebrew itself was read differently by the ancient Jews, who made the translation; in the second, it is represented by the epithets ‘Mighty’ and ‘Strong-One.’ And, in fact, the very same Hebrew expression is used in Ez.xxxii.21; and there our English Version translates it ‘the strong among the mighty’; and so in Ez.xxxi.11 Nebuchadnezzar is called the ‘mighty-one of the heathen,’ but, literally, it stands in the Hebrew ‘the God of heathen.’ So here, in Isaiah, there can be little doubt that the Greek translators have given the true meaning of the prophets, according to whom this glorious son of David should be called, ‘The Admirable, the Counsellor, the

Mighty Strong-One, the perpetual Father, the Prince of Peace,'—a series of titles, by which he sets forth the wisdom, and glory, and goodness, and peacefulness of his reign very much after the ordinary Oriental fashion in such cases. Thus an ancient Greek writer gives a letter from a Persian king to the king of Armenia, which begins as follows :—

Chosroes, king of kings, lord of lords, master of nations, *prince of peace*, saviour of men, among gods a man good and living for ever, among men a god most illustrious, most glorious, conqueror, rising together with the sun and in the night bestowing eyes—[giving light, as it were, by day and by night].

And, accordingly, in Luther's translation of the Bible, the words are rendered thus :—

'For unto us a child is born, a son to us is given, whose lordship is on his shoulder ; and he is called wonderful, counsel, *might*, *hero*, everlasting (or perpetual) father, prince of peace.'

It should be noted also that this verse of Isaiah's prophecies is nowhere quoted in the New Testament with reference to Christ, which would be very remarkable if the English Version contained the right translation of it, since nowhere in the Old Testament would the Divinity of Christ be then more distinctly asserted than here. It is probable that the N.T. writers, who (we know) made use habitually of the Septuagint Version in their quotations, (though sometimes with modifications, which show that they did not consider themselves bound to the strict letter of the Scriptures,) acquiesced in the Greek rendering of this passage, and therefore laid no particular stress upon it. This seems the more likely, inasmuch as a portion of the context is actually quoted, we see, in the words of the text, as expressly applicable to the time of Christ ; and to this we will now direct our attention more particularly.

'The people which sat in darkness  
Have seen a great light ;  
And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death—  
Upon them hath the light shined.'

There are three points worthy of notice in this prophetic utterance.

(i) First, the prophet recognizes a time of 'darkness' in the history of his people, when men were 'sitting in the region and shadow of death.' He recognizes here a fact of human experience. There are such times in the history

both of nations and of individuals. They may arise, as they did in the case of the prophet's own people, in connection with sin, and as the direct consequence of it. We know in what eloquent words he upbraids them in one place:—

‘Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth!  
 For Jehovah hath spoken;  
 I have nourished and brought up children,  
 And they—they have rebelled against me.  
 The ox knoweth his owner,  
 And the ass his master's crib;  
 But Israel doth not know,  
 My people doth not consider.  
 Ah sinful nation! people laden with iniquity!  
 Seed of evildoers! children that are corrupters!  
 They have forsaken Jehovah,  
 They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger,  
 They have gone away backward.  
 Why should ye be stricken any more?  
 Ye will revolt more and more;  
 The whole head is sick,  
 And the whole heart faint . . .  
 Your country is desolate,  
 Your cities burned with fire;  
 Your land—strangers devour it in your presence,  
 And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.’

Thus he regards their miseries as the direct chastisement of their sins. A dark day, in fact, had settled down upon the land of Israel. The Assyrians had already ravaged the northern portion of it; and, though at present their king was in league with Ahaz king of Judah,—who, in direct opposition to Isaiah's urgent remonstrance, had summoned him to his help against the forces of Syria and Israel,—the prophet foresaw that his powerful arms would in due time be turned against Judah and Jerusalem also.

And so it very soon came to pass. Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, on coming to the throne, ‘rebelled,’ we are told, ‘against the king of Assyria, and served him not,’—that is, he broke the compact which his father had made to pay a certain annual tribute. Thereupon, in Hezekiah's fourth year, the king of Assyria came up in fury first against Samaria and besieged it; and at the end of three years he took it, and carried away the population of the Ten Tribes—the kingdom of Israel—as captives into a far-off land. Then, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, the Assyrian host came up against the fenced cities of Judah and took



them. And Hezekiah humbled himself, sending to the king of Assyria and saying—

‘I have offended: return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear.’

Yet still the tide of war rolled on, and reached at length the very gates of Jerusalem. And then indeed was a time of great anxiety.

‘If one looked unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow,  
And the light is darkened in the heavens thereof’;

and the people sat down in mute despair, ‘in the land of the shadow of death.’

We observe, therefore, that such darkness, when the light of God’s Face seems for a while to be obscured, is not *always* a consequence of sin. For Hezekiah was a prince of deep and sincere piety. We are told of him, on his accession to the throne, that—

‘He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel: so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses. And Jehovah was with him, and prospered him whithersoever he went forth.’

Yet, after all this promising beginning, we find Hezekiah plunged in deep distress, and sitting in darkness deeper than any which had come down upon his idolatrous father, Ahaz. In one word, righteous persons and peoples, as well as wicked ones, may be bowed down at times under sore afflictions,—may be called for a while to ‘sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.’

(ii) But, secondly, the prophet recognizes, with the clear insight of a living faith, that in such darkness men sit not alone. There is One near them, who may make His Presence felt at any moment, and surely at the right time will appear as the helper of all that put their trust in Him. Thus Isaiah was able to comfort the drooping Hezekiah with the assurance, that light would break forth out of the darkness, that Jehovah would ‘defend his city to save it for His own sake, and for His servant David’s sake.’ Nay, even under the idolatrous Ahaz, he could entertain a confidence that, when chastisement had done its perfect work upon the rebellious hearts of God’s children, the favour of Jehovah and the light of His Countenance would be restored to them. With a prophetic glance into the future, he could

actually see already this restoration brought to pass : he could even then exclaim—

‘The people that walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light ;  
They that were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death—  
Upon them hath the light shined.’

And then he predicts in the language which we have already considered, the glorious reign of a just and pious prince, under whom this deliverance should be wrought for them.

It is not at all improbable that he had Hezekiah himself in view, who was about twelve years old when this prophecy was written, and, like our own Edward VI., perhaps gave already plain signs of the tractable and pious spirit which he afterwards displayed. And he was doubtless from the first under the direct influence of the prophet Isaiah (who is believed also to have been a family connection), as our own English prince was under that of Cranmer. Or it may be that the prophet looked still further down the stream of time, and saw in some distant age arise ‘the rod out of the stem of Jesse,’—

‘of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end upon the throne of David.’

In any case the hopes of Isaiah were not fulfilled in the temporal sense which his words imply, and in which, no doubt, he expected their fulfilment. Never was that grand vision of his generous spirit realized in its literal meaning :—

‘In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve [Jehovah] with the Assyrian. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land : whom Jehovah of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance.’ xix. 23-25.

But Assyria and Egypt were never united with Israel in one common worship of Jehovah, the Living God. It is possible, of course, to have recourse to the usual process of ‘spiritualizing’ these words, and to say that by ‘Egypt’ and ‘Assyria’ must be meant not the countries so-called,—to which, however, they would of course be applied by the very persons to whom Isaiah addressed himself,—but the heathen generally, so that the prediction means no more

than that the future Church of Christ should contain believers from different peoples, from every nation under heaven. But why must this particular portion of the prophecy be 'spiritualized,' whereas others, when it suits our convenience, must be taken literally, and regarded as infallible prognostications of coming events? This is, in fact, to treat the Bible with dishonour, by choosing at our own pleasure what we will regard as actual *bonâ fide* predictions of special circumstances, and what we will explain generally, stripping it thus of all its point and force and meaning for those to whom it was uttered. That orthodox commentator, the Rev. Thos. Scott, observes on this passage—

I apprehend that the grand accomplishment of these verses, and of the latter part of this extraordinary prophecy, *is still to be expected*—

that is, he admits that it has not yet been fulfilled; though how 'Assyria' can now be joined with 'Egypt' and 'Israel,' in a common act of worship, must seem to most persons inconceivable.

(iii) I observe, then, thirdly, that the true prophetic insight was here exercised, not in prognosticating the details of future events, but in laying down the great principles of God's dealings with men,—in affirming the eternal truths, in uttering the Word of God, by which the hearts of men in all ages are fed as with living bread. The people did *not* repent and return to God, as Isaiah expected: the glorious prince whom he predicted did *not* arise to—

'set up an ensign for the nations, and assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.'

The people of Israel did *not*, as he predicted, 'lay their hand upon Edom and Moab,' nor did 'the children of Ammon obey them'; nor were Assyria and Egypt ever joined with Israel in the bonds of a holy alliance. In respect of such details, and a multitude of others like them, we must admit that Isaiah and other prophets have been mistaken: while yet the Divine Truths which they taught, the Divine Principles which they announced,—the real signs of their prophetic power,—were the Living Word of God, eternally and unchangeably true. It is true that 'Light is sown for the righteous, and joyful glad-

ness for such as are true of heart': and for such as these the prophet might utter his oracle with the most perfect and unwavering confidence:—

'Who is among you that feareth Jehovah,  
That obeyeth the voice of His servant,  
That walketh in darkness and hath no light?  
Let him trust in the name of Jehovah,  
And stay upon his God.'

Nay, he might exclaim of them, as one who saw the end of God's work from the beginning—

'The people that walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death—  
Upon them hath the light shined.'

But then the Light, which 'cometh down from the Father of Lights,'—the Light, which is the Life of men,—the Light that in all ages comforts the sad heart and gladdens the weary eye,—is not the light of this world's splendour, such as the prophet in the words which follow the text, and in many other parts of his prophecies, expects to be bestowed on his people and their king. It is the Light of Truth, the Light of Righteousness, the Light of Love. This is that 'sure word of prophecy,' of which we were speaking last Sunday—

'whereunto we shall do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.'

And the prophets of old felt this, though they did not fully realize it, as we do now, taught by the lips of Jesus Christ himself. And so Isaiah in these prophecies, while continually insisting upon the return of Israel to their own land and the restoration of their temporal glory, still lays the basis of all their future happiness in the practice of justice and righteousness, by the people at large, and especially by their king. All his hopes for them were based on this, that 'Zion should be redeemed with judgment, and they that return of her with righteousness'—that 'her judges should be restored as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning, and afterward she should be called The city of righteousness, the faithful city'—that her prince should sit upon the throne of David, 'to order it and to establish it, with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever.'

And in the view of this he could address the city of Zion—

‘In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. Behold! God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’

Alas! the happy time never came for the people at large, for which the prophet longed so devoutly. Lower and lower dropped the gloom upon the land; deeper and deeper became the darkness,—relieved at times by a temporary lifting of the clouds, as in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, but becoming fearfully black in the reign of Manasseh, Hezekiah’s son, who ‘seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom Jehovah destroyed before the children of Israel,’ and in those of Jehoiakim, Josiah’s son, and Zedekiah, Josiah’s brother, each of whom ‘did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done,’ and under the last of whom the cup of Israel’s iniquities was full, and they were ‘driven away’ into the thick darkness, a darkness ‘which might be felt,’—into the terrible gloom of the Babylonish captivity.

So far, then, as Isaiah coupled with the promise of ‘light’ the promise also of national prosperity, his words, it must be confessed, were not realized. But the light was there, notwithstanding, for all true hearts. Hezekiah was cheered and enabled to put his trust in the Living God, in the midst of all his griefs and perplexities. Josiah received a message of peace, while the woe was gathering upon the head of his people, ‘because his heart was tender, and he had humbled himself before the Lord.’ And each pious soul, we may be sure,—our own hearts ‘prophecy’ this, and all experience confirms it,—was Divinely soothed and comforted in that most gloomy time of trial—was taught to smile amidst its tears, and say—

‘It is of Jehovah’s mercies that we are not consumed,  
Because His compassions fail not,  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Thy faithfulness.  
Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul;  
Therefore will I hope in Him.  
Jehovah is good unto them that wait for Him,—

To the soul that seeketh Him.  
 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait  
 For the salvation of Jehovah.'

Let us be sure it is so still. In every age, for nations and for individuals, the words of the prophet are fulfilled, that—

' They that were walking in darkness  
 Have seen great light;  
 They that were dwelling in the land of the shadow of death—  
 Upon them hath the light shined.'

The time would fail me now to speak more at length of the numerous instances in the history of the world, in which such a prediction has been eminently fulfilled, as at the time of the return of the Jews from Babylon, at the time of the first preaching of Christianity, at the time of the Great Reformation,—when light has been given from the Father of Lights to dispel the clouds of darkness, which had long been gathering and brooding over the hearts of men. But in our own time, too, such light has been abundantly given. For, though it cannot be said that this age, in which we live, is actually dark, as it was before the Reformation, when witches were put to death, and heretics burnt at the stake, as if the Christian's God, like that of the Jews in Manasseh's time, was a very Moloch, who required to be worshipped with human sacrifices, yet surely there is 'dimness' enough within the Church, and 'darkness' among the heathen tribes without it; and the pure bright Light of the Everlasting Gospel, the tidings of our Father's Love, has been darkened in many places with the arbitrary dogmas, and discoloured with the vain traditions, of men. Yet God, in His Infinite Goodness, has poured forth light abundantly around us in this our day,—bright and strong enough, we trust, to pierce the thickest gloom of traditional teaching, and reveal once more the Blessed Face of our loving Father, which has been so long obscured.

But, while we rejoice in this Light, which is freely given us, let us be careful also to walk in the Light, as children of God,—to 'walk in the Light as He is in the Light,' that we may 'have fellowship with Him'—'coming to the Light continually, and bringing our doings to the Light, that they may be made manifest that they are wrought in

God.' It has been said that the Modern Theology will make men careless and godless,—that it may even bring back upon us the times of unbridled license and lust, and all the horrors of the French Revolution. No! the Modern Theology is in very truth a return to the clear and solemn teaching of Jesus himself. It brings the soul face to face with the Living God, as a Father and Friend: it quickens the conscience in the sense of that Gracious, yet Awful, Presence, which we feel at every instant so near to us. It tells us that our loving Father will not suffer us to sin without chastisement,—that, if we will persist in what we know to be evil, He may withdraw from us altogether for a time the joy of His salvation, the Light of His Countenance. It bids us repent and return at once from the path that leadeth unto death, lest we lose ourselves in guilt and misery: it says to us—

'Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.'

But it speaks also a word of hope and life to the returning penitent. It assures us of a Father's Love, that will meet the poor prodigal on the way, as he comes along drooping and hesitating, stricken through with grief and shame, to his long-forsaken home,—that will embrace him with the tokens of forgiveness, will heal him, and lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners.'

## XXII.

### THE INSTITUTION OF THE LEVITES.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1866.

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#### DEUT. XII. 19.

'TAKE HEED TO THYSELF THAT THOU FORSAKE NOT THE LEVITE AS LONG AS THOU LIVEST UPON THE EARTH.'

The history of the institution of the Levites in Israel is not a little perplexing. The text, however, brings the subject of the Levites before us, and in order to understand these words, as well as the whole chapter from which they are taken, and which has been read for the First Lesson of this morning, it is necessary to refer somewhat at length to that history. I propose to do this more particularly this morning, and in the evening I shall endeavour to draw some general practical lessons, suited for the present time, from the matter thus considered.

If we turn to the Book of Numbers, we find an account of the Levites being solemnly set apart by express Divine command for the service of the Sanctuary. They were not, however, to act as *Priests*, that office being expressly reserved for the 'sons of Aaron,' and the penalty of death being threatened for any that should presume, not being of the seed of Aaron, to discharge the duties of the Priesthood :—

'Thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their Priest's office; and *the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*' N.iii.10,38.

But the Levites were to 'minister to' the priests, to 'stand before' Aaron and his sons, as the office of the Priests was to 'stand before' Jehovah :—

'Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them—[lit. make them stand]—before Aaron the Priest, that they may minister unto him. . . .



And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons ; they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.' N.iii.6-9.  
 Their business was to take charge of the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and all its belongings :—

'they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof ; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.' N.i.50.

And the Levites, too, were set apart, like the Priests, for their sacred duties under the terrible sanction that whoever should intrude into their office should be put to death :—

'When the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down, and, when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up ; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.' v.51.

Accordingly, in the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, this distinction between the Priests and Levites is very strongly marked. Dathan and Abiram, in fact, were laymen, who rebelled against the authority of Moses : but Korah and his company were Levites, who murmured against Aaron.

'And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi ! Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them ? And He hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee : and *seek ye the Priesthood also ?*—for which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah : for what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him ?' N.xvi.8-11.

And when, according to this narrative, the earth had 'opened' her mouth, and 'swallowed up' Korah and his party, and their families, and a 'fire had come out from Jehovah,' that 'consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense,' the Priest Eleazar received a Divine command, to gather up out of the burning the brazen censers which they carried, and to make with the metal 'broad plates for the covering of the altar,'—

'to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before Jehovah, that he be not as Korah and as his company.' v.40.

And so, too, the Levites were not even to look upon the holy things which it was their duty to carry ; they were not to go near, to bear the sacred vessels, until the Priests had covered them :—

'When Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the Sanctu-

ary and all the vessels of the Sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward, *after that* the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it; but they shall not touch any holy thing, *lest they die.* N.iv.15.

'Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the Kohathites from among the Levites. But thus do unto them, that *they may live and not die*, when they approach unto the most holy things. Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden. But *they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.*' N.iv.18-20.

And again we read that 'Jehovah said unto Aaron'—

'Thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee. But thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle. Only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the Sanctuary and the Altar, *that neither they, nor ye also, die.*' N. xviii.1-3.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that in *this* part of the Pentateuch, not only are both Priests and Levites, 'the whole tribe of Levi,' separated in the most solemn manner from the other tribes of Israel, but within that tribe the family of Aaron is as solemnly separated from the rest, and set apart exclusively for the work of the Priesthood.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, however, from which the text is taken, we find no signs of any such distinction. Throughout the whole Book we find continual mention of 'the Priests the Levites,' or 'the Priests the sons of Levi,' as if the two words, 'Priests' and 'Levites,' were convertible, and expressed identically the very same body of persons. We there read, for instance,—

'Thou shalt come unto *the Priests the Levites*, and unto the Judge that shall be in those days,' xvii. 9,—

'He shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before *the Priests the Levites*,' xvii.18—

'*The Priests the Levites*, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel,' xviii.1,—

'*The Priests the sons of Levi* shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen, to minister unto Him and to bless in the name of Jehovah,' xxi.5.

and similarly in other places, as xxiv.8, xxvii.9, xxxi.9. And so, too, in this Book of Deuteronomy, the word 'Levite' is used simply by itself to express a 'Priest,' as where we read—

'If a *Levite* come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desires of his mind unto the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall *minister in the name of Jeho-*

*vak* his God, as all *his brethren the Levites* do, which *stand there before Jehovah.*' xviii.6,7.

'At that time Jehovah separated the tribe of Levi'—mark, the whole tribe of Levi, not the family of Aaron only—'to *bear the ark* of the Covenant of Jehovah, to *stand before Jehovah*, to *minister unto Him*, and to *bless in His Name*, as it is in this day.' x.8.

But it was the duty of the *Priests*—not of the Levites, generally—to 'bear the Ark'—that is, to bear it uncovered in solemn processions, Jo.iii.3,6,8,13,14,15,17,1K.ii.26,viii.3,&c. And, accordingly, in Deuteronomy we read, in one place, of '*the Levites*, which bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah,' xxxi.25, and, in another place, of '*the Priests the Levites*,' as doing the same, v.9. So it was the Priest—and not the Levites—whose office it was to 'stand before *Jehovah*,' (that is, to stand before the holy of holies in the Tabernacle, in which was the Ark, the visible sign of Jehovah's presence,) and to minister unto *Jehovah*; while the Levites only stood before the *Priests* or before the *Congregation*, and ministered to *them*, N.iii.6, xvi.9,xviii.2. And 'so, again, it was the Priests alone, who were commanded to bless in Jehovah's name, L.ix.22, N.vi.22-27.

It is plain, then, that in this Book of Deuteronomy the 'Priest' is really the same as the 'Levite.' The two words are used as convertible terms; and the distinction between the Priests and the Levites, which is so marked in the Book of Numbers, entirely disappears in Deuteronomy. Hence, whereas in Leviticus and Numbers, the Priests are repeatedly styled '*the sons of Aaron*,' L.i.5,7,8,11,ii.2,iii.2, xiii.2,N.x.8, and are *never once* called the '*sons of Levi*,' in Deuteronomy, on the contrary, they are repeatedly called the '*sons of Levi*' or '*Levites*,' as you have heard, and they are *never once* called the '*sons of Aaron*.'

Now this is very remarkable, and must be felt to be so by any one, who has once had his attention called to it. In one of the very last chapters of Numbers, at the very end of the forty years' wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and therefore only just before the time at which the story in Deuteronomy is supposed to begin, we find the distinction between the Priests and the Levites maintained as strongly as ever. After the conquest of Midian, it was ordered that the booty should be divided into two parts,—one half for the men of war who went on that expedition,

the other for the rest of the people who stayed behind : and from the share of the first, the men of war, a tribute was to be taken, one out of five hundred, for Jehovah, and this was to belong to the *Priests* ; while from the other half, the people's portion, one out of fifty was to be taken for the *Levites*. N.xxxi.28-47. How is it, then, that this distinction immediately disappears, when we turn a few pages on to the Book of Deuteronomy, supposed to have been written by Moses himself, or at all events to have been spoken by him, only a short time afterwards ? Is it possible to suppose that Moses could have so suddenly changed the whole tone of his discourses, as this would imply,—more especially, if the solemn ordinances for the strict separation of *Priests* and *Levites* had been uttered, in his hearing, by the Mouth of Jehovah Himself ?

No ! it is not conceivable. And this, in fact, is one of the phenomena which have drawn closer attention to the Book of Deuteronomy, and have led to a more careful examination of its contents,—the result of which is that, as I have already told you, no doubt now remains in the minds of the most eminent scholars, who have thoroughly and dispassionately studied the subject, that this Book was written at a very late age in the history of Judah,—as some think, in the age of Manasseh,—as I believe, a very little later, in that of Josiah, that is, eight or nine hundred years after the time of the Exodus. Accordingly, in the prophetic writings of *that* age, we find the very same expression, which appears so frequently in Deuteronomy, 'the *Priests* the *Levites*,' repeated continually, while the *Priests* are never spoken of as the 'sons of Aaron.' Thus in Jer.xxxiii.17-22 we read—

'Thus saith Jehovah, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel : neither shall *the Priests the Levites* want a man before me, to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. . . . If ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne, and with *the Levites the Priests*, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and *the Levites that minister unto me.*' xxxiii.17-22.

And so in Ez.xliii.19, xlv.15, xlviii.13, Mal.iii.3, comp. Mal.ii.4-8. And even the name of Aaron, on which such

stress is laid in Leviticus and Numbers, where the Priests are always called the 'sons of Aaron,' is not so much as mentioned by any one of the prophets, except only *once* in Mic.vi.4.

This, then, is plainly one peculiarity, which marks the Book of Deuteronomy as a composition of a far later date than that usually assigned to it. And I will now point to another equally strong indication of this,—one more immediately connected with the text before us, and helping, in fact, to explain its significance :—

'Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth.'

We have seen that by *Levites* the Deuteronomist really means *Priests*. But, whether by this expression is meant Priest or common Levite, what can such a command as this by any possibility mean, if supposed to come from the pen or from the lips of Moses? 'Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite'! And there are many other passages in this Book which repeat in effect a similar injunction :—

'Thou shalt eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household, and *the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him*; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.' xiv.26,27.

Here we find the Levite included, as a needy and dependant person, within the range of each householder's charity. The Israelite is to eat, year by year, 'before Jehovah his God, in the place which He shall choose to place His Name there,'—

'the tithe of his corn, of his wine, and of his oil, and the firstlings of his herds and of his flocks,' v.23;

or, if the place of the Sanctuary is too far off for him to take to it the tithes in kind, he is to turn them into money and take this to the holy place, and feast upon it there with his family; but he is 'not to forsake the Levite,'—he must remember to let the Levite also have a share in his enjoyment. And so, again and again, we find the Levite in this Book of Deuteronomy put on the same level exactly with 'the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow':—

'And the *Levite* (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, that are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied.' xiv.29;

'And thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and

thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the *Levite* that is within thy gates, and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow* that are among you.' xvi.11.

'And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the *Levite*, and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, that are within thy gates.' xvi.14.

It is plain that the '*Levite*' is here spoken of as in a very necessitous condition, dependant, like '*the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,*' upon the liberality of others. Yet how very strange and utterly inexplicable is this upon the traditionary view, that Moses wrote or spoke this Book of Deuteronomy! For, in the foregoing Books of Leviticus and Numbers, abundant provision had been made not from the voluntary charities of the people, but from the sacrifices of every kind which they were bound under the Divine Law to offer, for the support both of the Priests and of the Levites, L.ii.3,v.13,N.vi.18,29,vii.9,x.12,13,N.xviii. Nay, the very tithes, which each householder is here permitted to make a feast of with his family,—only '*not to forsake the Levite,*' to let him also have a share in it,—are especially assigned by Jehovah himself *wholly* to the Levites, as their own particular due, only that they were to give a tenth of all to the Priests. Thus we read—

'The *tithes* of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto Jehovah, I have given to the *Levites* to inherit: therefore, I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for Jehovah, even a tenth part of your tithe. . . . And ye shall give thereof Jehovah's heave-offering to Aaron the Priest. . . . Then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households; for it is your reward for your service in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.' L.xviii.26-31.

And so, too, the '*firstlings,*' which also were allowed for these family feastings, were assigned in the Book of Numbers exclusively to the *Priests*, xviii.15-18.

How is it, then, conceivable that Moses, after receiving (as is supposed) these commands from Jehovah Himself,—after having at the very end of the Book of Numbers, at the close of the fortieth year of the wanderings, assigned

forty-eight cities for the Levites to live in, with their 'suburbs for their cattle, and for their goods, and for their beasts,' xxv.1-8,—would immediately afterwards proceed to speak of them as ranked among the needy and destitute? Supposing even that (as some might say) he foresaw that in a later day the laws of sacrifice would be neglected, that the 'firstlings' would not be paid to the Priests, nor the 'tithes' to the Levites, and that the forty-eight cities would never really be reserved for their use, can it be believed that he would himself deliberately, in his last address to the people of Israel, sweep away at a stroke all these Divine commands, and recognize it as the right and proper thing to do,—an act of the truest piety, of the most devout obedience to the Will and Word of Jehovah,—an act by means of which, it is expressly said, 'they might learn to fear Jehovah their God always,' D.xiv.23—if each Israelite consumed annually, 'before Jehovah his God, in the place which he shall choose to place his Name there,' in a joyous feast for himself and his family, the very means of sustenance which were expressly prescribed for the Priests and Levites,—provided only that he did not 'forsake' the latter, but allowed them, with other indigent persons, to share in the good things which he and his enjoyed to the full, to 'feed upon the crumbs which fell from his table'?

No! I repeat, it is not conceivable. But here, again, we have a decisive indication of the later age in which the Book of Deuteronomy was written. It is probable that we very greatly over-estimate the number and importance of the Priests in the time of the kings of Judah, taking for granted that they really enjoyed the privileges and dignities, which are assigned to them by the laws of the Pentateuch. Yet, if we carefully examine the more authentic history of the later kings, which we find in the Second Book of Kings, we shall perceive indications that their number was but small and their influence inconsiderable. In the days of Josiah—the age in which Deuteronomy was written—there were, we find, a 'chief Priest,' some 'Priests of the second order,' and others who are called 'keepers of the door,' 2K.xxiii.4. These 'door-keepers' are expressly called 'Priests,' 2K.xii.9; and in the time of Josiah's son, Zedekiah, there were only *five*

Priests altogether, ministering in the Temple, 2K.xxv.18, viz. one 'chief Priest,' one 'second Priest' or 'Priest of the second order,' and three 'keepers of the door.'

From the fact that these 'door-keepers' were in those days regarded as Priests, it is easy to see how the Deuteronomist would make no distinction between the higher and lower clergy, but would call them all by one common name 'Priests' or 'Levites.' In Solomon's time, no doubt, they were more numerous, amidst the first glories of the new-built Temple, under the direction of Zadok, the chief Priest of that time. For this Zadok, we find, had supported the young king, then but a youth, the youngest of all the sons of David, in his claim for the throne, in opposition to his oldest brother Adonijah. Nor does he appear to have interfered at all to check the ruthless hand of Solomon, when, like a true Eastern despot, he made sure his own seat on the throne of his father David by putting his brother to death, 1K.ii.24, as well as his father's gray-headed captain, Joab, whom he ordered to be dragged from the horns of the altar of Jehovah, to which he had fled for refuge, and butchered in cold blood. In like manner Solomon, we are told, 'put Zadok the Priest in the room of Abiathar,' in the room of that aged Priest, who had been with his father in all his trials, from the time when he wandered for fear of Saul in the wilderness of Judah, and to whom, because he too had supported the claims of Adonijah, the eldest son of David, the ungenerous king uttered the harsh word —

'Get thee to Anathoth unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death. But I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the Ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being Priest unto Jehovah.' 1K.ii.26,27.

This would, indeed, have been a strange act for this young prince, to have 'thrust out' from his holy office a High Priest, anointed with the holy oil, wearing the consecrated garments, handed down along the line of Priests from father to son from the time of Aaron, E.xxix.29, N.xx.28, —one who had given repeatedly Divine oracles to David, 1S.xxiii.9, xxx.7, —it is supposed by means of the Urim and Thummim, the mysterious jewels set in the holy breastplate, E.xxviii.30. It would, I say, have been strange in-



deed, if a youth of seventeen, or eighteen at most, could have ventured to do this, and evidently with the consent and approval—probably by the advice—of such counsellors as Nathan the Prophet and Zadok the Priest,—if it were necessary to regard the account in the Pentateuch, which sets forth in such strong terms, the high prerogatives of the Priesthood, much more of the Chief Priest, as infallibly, or even historically, true.

But in these arbitrary proceedings, in which, unquestionably, the new Chief Priest must have taken a very leading part, we see sufficient evidence of the stirring energy, the pushing forwardness, of Zadok's character. Nathan the Prophet disappears at once from the field of the history; he was probably by this time advanced in age, and may soon have died: but two of his sons appear in the list of Solomon's chief officers, 1K.iv.5. At the head of that list, however, stands 'Azariah the son of Zadok,' v.1; and Zadok himself appears in it as Priest, now put over the head of his aged senior Abiathar, who is still named indeed as one of the Priests,—'Zadok and Abiathar were the Priests,'—but who had been practically 'thrust out' of office altogether. That Zadok, in fact, did fill a very prominent and active part in that age, in the ordering of public worship, and the arrangement of priestly duties, in connection with the new Temple, we cannot doubt. And, indeed, it is indicated plainly enough by the circumstance, that in the later times, though the Priests are never called by any of the Prophets 'sons of Aaron,' they are spoken of as 'the House of Zadok,' 2Ch.xxxi.10; and so Ezekiel repeatedly distinguishes the *faithful* Priests, as 'sons of Zadok,' from the 'Levites' or the 'Priests the Levites,' generally, as in Ez.xl.46,xliii.19,xliv.15,xlviii.11. It would seem that Zadok must have left an impress of his work upon his own age, the remembrance of which had been retained traditionally.

However this may be, and in whatever age, before or after the Captivity, the laws and regulations in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, which define the duties of the Priesthood, and draw such a strong line of demarcation between the Priests and the Levites, may have been written, certainly in the later times of the kingdom of Judah, as I have said, we see no signs of such

a distinction, or of any such dignity, as respects position, numbers, or wealth, attaching to the Priesthood in Israel. As to *position*, it is remarkable that we find the Priest ranked in David's time far down in the list of his officers, *after* the commander of the forces, Joab, and *after* the officer called the recorder,—apparently the master of the rolls, or keeper, and perhaps writer, of the records of the reign,—2S.viii.16,17. And in the list of Solomon's princes, they rank still lower,—after the president of the council, after the scribes or secretaries of state, after the recorder, after the commander of the forces, as before, 1K.iv.2-4. Then as to *numbers*, even in Solomon's time we read of only *two* Priests, 1K.iv.4, though these, no doubt, had many subordinate assistants; but in Zedekiah's, as you have heard, the whole body of ecclesiastics employed at the temple was only *five*. In fact, the area of the temple itself was only 4,000 square feet, just exactly twice the size of this small cathedral: but then the sacrifices were not offered in the temple itself, but in the court outside it. Lastly, as to *wealth*, it would seem that even for this small body of Priests and Levites the supplies of necessary food were sometimes deficient. It is reasonable to believe that, in the time of David and Solomon, a portion of the royal revenues was applied directly to the support of Divine Worship. But under the later kings we have unmistakable signs of the poverty of the Priests. Thus the Chronicler informs us that Hezekiah ordered afresh the courses of the Priests and Levites, restoring the sacrificial system 'as it is written in the Law of Jehovah,' 2Ch.xxxi.2,3; and provided especially for their maintenance, by enjoining that 'tithes' and 'first-fruits' should be brought in as of old; and they were brought in abundantly, we read, 'heaps on heaps.' v.6.

'Then Hezekiah questioned with the Priests and Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief Priest, of the House of Zadok, answered him and said, *Since the people began to bring the offerings into the House of Jehovah, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty.*' v.9,10.

From this it would appear that, *before* the order in question was issued, the Priests and Levites had *not* enough to eat. We find this statement, however, in the narrative of the Chronicler, who, as I have shown on a former occasion, cannot be depended upon as a trustworthy authority on

any point, where the Levitical body is concerned, unless he is supported by other evidence. As Dean Stanley observes, *Jewish Church, 2nd Series*, p.424,430 :—

Full of interest and beauty as is the Book of Chronicles, it yet, least of any of the sacred books, partakes of the supernatural gift of  *courageous impartiality*, which elsewhere is so remarkable. . . . The Levitical Priest may have been the least Divine of all the Mosaic institutions. The Levitical Book of Chronicles may have been the last and least of all the sacred books.

On this particular point, however, the general conclusion, which we should draw from the above account of the state of things in Hezekiah's days, is abundantly confirmed by the numerous passages in Deuteronomy, which include the Levites with the poor and destitute, with 'the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger,'—which speak of their 'sojourning' about the land as dependants and vagrants, 'within the gates' of others, instead of living in their own Levitical cities, as prescribed in the Book of Numbers. Supposing even that in Solomon's time, under the royal authority, an attempt may have been made to assign such towns for the support of the Temple ministry, yet the whole arrangement must have broken down immediately after Solomon's death, when the Ten Northern Tribes revolted from his son Rehoboam, and separated from the tribe of Judah. For it is made a special complaint against Jeroboam son of Nebat, the first king of Israel, that he 'made priests indiscriminately of the people, which were not of the *sons of Levi*.' 1K.xii.31. Our E.V. has it—'he made priests of the lowest of the people;' but that is a mistake in our translation. And accordingly the Rev. Thos. Scott says, in his very orthodox commentary—

Rather, he made priests from every extremity of the land, as from every tribe and family without exception.

From this time the Levites lost certainly any hold they might ever have had upon any cities which may have belonged to them in the northern kingdom; while there is no sign that they ever had possession of the other thirteen cities in the kingdom of Judah.

There can be no doubt, then, that in the time of the Deuteronomist, the 'Priests the Levites' were generally in a very needy condition. The few, who actually ministered at the Temple, would, we may believe, be sufficiently provided for: and others, as Jeremiah, xxxii.6-12, may

have had some private property, acquired by purchase or inheritance. So the Deuteronomist says—

‘If a Levite come from any of the gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which Jehovah shall choose, then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before Jehovah. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.’ xviii.6-8.

But the very language of this provision seems to imply that there was no very eager desire on the part of the Levites generally to come up to Jerusalem, and devote themselves to the work of the Temple ministry. And, since we find so few in actual attendance at the Temple in the days of Josiah and Zedekiah, it is probable that the inducement here held out, of sharing ‘like portions’ with ‘all their brethren, who stood there before Jehovah’ to minister, was not sufficient to attract many from their other more secular employments in different parts of the land. What these were, and how far they secured for them a livelihood, does not appear. Perhaps, they were engaged in teaching and conducting religious services of some kind among those Israelites, who lived away from the City and the Temple. But it would seem that very many must have been in impoverished circumstances, so that ‘the Levite’ became habitually connected in thought with ‘the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.’ ‘Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite,’—was now the appeal made to the pity and charitable consideration of his brethren. The original tithe-system, as laid down in the Levitical Law, was evidently no longer effective, if, indeed, it was then in existence, or ever at any time in full operation. Here, however, in the context, of which the text forms a part, it would seem, a plan is suggested, much more likely to be popular and practically effective; since the ‘tithes’ and ‘firstlings’ were on this system to be consumed—at the Temple indeed, ‘in the place which Jehovah would choose,’ but—in feasting there by the tithe-payer and his family, the poor Levite ‘within his gates’ being included only as a guest.

‘Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the *tithe* of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the *firstlings* of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will offerings, or heave-offerings of thy hand. But thou must eat them before Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, thou, and

thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.' xii.17-19.

Thus the 'Levite within the gates' is ranked in Deuteronomy after 'son and daughter, manservant and maidservant,' in the enjoyment of those good things, the tithes, and firstlings, which, according to the Law in Leviticus and Numbers, the body to which he belonged had a right to claim entirely as their own particular portion, under an express Divine command. Like 'the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless,' or any other poor dependant, he might go up with his wealthier brother and his family, and look to be permitted to share in their joy.

I have said that I will reserve to this evening the more direct practical consideration of this subject. Yet one word before we part. You see that even this system failed, which enjoined on every householder to make some provision for the support of the Priest. What else could have been expected, when the Priesthood was often profligate in the extreme, whom Jeremiah, living in the days of the Deuteronomist, describes as impious and idolatrous—

'The Priests said not, Where is Jehovah? and they that handle the Law, knew me not.' ii.8.

'Both Prophet and Priest are profane; yea, in my House have I found their wickedness, saith Jehovah.' xxiii.11.

'At that time, saith Jehovah, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem out of their graves. And they shall spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have worshipped.' viii.1,2.

'A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land! The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?' iv.30,31.

And what will it be in the end in *our* land, if the prophets shall 'prophesy falsely,' and the priests once more, as in the days of old, shall come to 'bear rule by their means'? What will it be, if the truth is suppressed, and traditional falsehood propagated,—if a National Establishment is maintained for the very purpose of stopping thought and checking utterance, when the progress of the times requires

that the old forms should be replenished with new life, and God's eternal truths be brought forward, as powerful and fresh as in the days of the Deuteronomist, but clothed in such language, enforced by such arguments, as may best suit our own day, and not his? If the people love to have it so, I ask, what will the end be? It is easy to foresee—an end like that which befell the National Establishment in Israel, and, with the Church, the State also. Dishonesty and untruthfulness would spread, like a hateful canker, over the land, if it is not spreading now, under this very process. It would be with us, as in the days of Jeremiah, when he cried—

'From the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness, and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.' vi.13.

Let us hope and believe that the people 'will *not* love to have it so,'—that, at all events, the laity of England will not desire—will not *allow*—the truth to be suppressed in the congregation,—that they will wish to have the whole truth told them,—that they will not believe that God can be served with falsehood, or that any portion of God's Truth can harm us,—nay, that anything in heaven or earth can harm us, if we are 'following that which is good.'

## XXIII.

### THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1866.

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DEUT. XII. 19.

'TAKE HEED TO THYSELF THAT THOU FORSAKE NOT THE LEVITE AS LONG  
AS THOU LIVEST UPON THE EARTH.'

I EXPLAINED this morning the circumstances under which these words were written, by one who most probably lived in the reign of Josiah, towards the end of the kingdom of Judah, but at a time when it was still hoped by devout and earnest men, like the prophet Jeremiah, that, by a timely repentance and a complete reformation, the impending evils might yet through God's Mercy be averted. I explained also some facts in the history of the Levitical body, both in former ages and in that particular age, which throw light upon such a command as this, to 'forsake not the Levite,'—a command which must strike every one at once as singularly inconsistent with the privileges assigned to them in the Pentateuch, and the ample provision there made for their maintenance. I showed that they never really appear to have enjoyed those prerogatives,—that in Josiah's time, at all events (the time of the Deuteronomist), they were beyond all doubt in a very necessitous condition; so that, as Dean Stanley writes (*Jewish Church, 2nd Series*, p.421) :—

They often appear to have been a needy and ill-provided class. The Levites are constantly reckoned amongst the objects of eleemosynary support, and are described as dependant on irregular channels for their supplies even of ordinary food.

Let us now consider the questions which are suggested by the text before us, somewhat more closely from a

practical point of view. These questions appear to be two:—

(i) That of the *existence* of 'Levites,'—in other words, of persons set apart for the due performance of religious acts and ceremonies on behalf of the community;

(ii) That of their *maintenance*, as justly to be supplied by those for whom they are expected to minister.

'Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth.'

I do not think that in this congregation I need dwell upon the second part of this subject. You have shown your willingness,—you show it every Sunday, and you have shown it of late in a yet more forcible way—to recognize your duty to contribute to the support of a minister of God's Word among you. I shall rather, therefore, speak of what that minister should be, in accordance with your wants and the special needs of the present day.

We have lately been considering the question of the 'Prophet.' We have now to do with that of the 'Priest'—that is, of one whose special business it is—not to teach, not to exhort, reprove, rebuke, not to advise and comfort, not to administer spiritual medicine to a mind diseased,—for all this is the work of the prophet, who may, indeed, be also a Priest, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel were,—but to stand before God on behalf and in the name of their brethren, to administer the rites which bind men together in one body, as a religious community, to 'offer gifts and sacrifices,' and be the mouthpiece of the whole congregation, in lifting up the voice of praise and prayer to God. The Prophet's gifts 'come from above, from the Father of Lights.' The Priest is ordained of men, and enters upon his office vested with authority at the hands of his brethren, to act as their spokesman and representative. The Prophet speaks, in the Name of God, the Word of Truth, which goes to the conscience and the heart. The Priest speaks in the name of the Church; he absolves or condemns in the name of the Church; and his judgment may be utterly wrong, as it was of old when Caiaphas pronounced, 'He hath spoken blasphemy!'—or as it was in later days, when, in strict accordance with the laws of the Church, the Priest sent the unbelieving philosopher to the prison, and the heretical reformer to the stake.



In the childhood of the world, as in the childhood of the individual, the Father in every Family was both Priest and Prophet, and was both by Divine ordinance. We need no proof of the right which a father, simply as such, possesses, to impress on the young and pliant mind a sense of its duties towards an Unseen Parent, to lead the devotions, to shape the creed, of his children. Does any one suppose that there would be no honour for parents, no reverence from children, unless the Commandment of God was written on tables of stone to enforce it? It was His Command, most surely, long before written letters were invented. These, indeed, were a Divine Gift, and to be devoutly attributed to Him, who is the spring and source of all Light and Life. But an earlier, a more universal law has been written on the heart of man,—has been enforced among us by those Divine affections which God's own Breath has kindled, the law that a child should 'hear the instruction of a Father.'

And you, parents, will feel, I am sure, your duty in this respect,—to be the Prophets, and Priests, as well as the Rulers, of your household,—for all three functions are gathered up in the sacred name of Father. These are difficult times, no doubt, in which to exercise the most holy of all offices, in which to discharge the most momentous of all duties, within your own family circle,—when you feel that with you it rests to shape more or less the faith of your child, to train its feet gently in the way of life,—and when you feel perhaps also, that so much of what was taught, as unquestionable truth, in your own younger days, has now passed away never more to return. Yes! but the essence of all faith is there.

'He that cometh unto God must believe that He Is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

You can say to your child, in the language of the Prophet—

'What does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

If perplexed yourself with many thoughts, and harassed with the controversies, to which the present age has given rise, and in which you feel you must take a part, from which you cannot escape,—rather, from which, as a true servant of God, as a faithful Christian, you cannot consent to with-

draw yourself, for you cannot consent, with a weak cowardice or a guilty indolence, to let the whole burden of them fall upon your children in the next generation, you may always fall back on those words in which the writer of Ecclesiastes sums up 'the conclusion of the whole matter,'—

'Fear God, and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty—rather, this is the whole—of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil;'

words of which an eminent living Divine has truly said (Dean Stanley, *Jewish Church, 2nd Series*, p.259) :—

For all students of ecclesiastical history, for all students of theology, for all who are about to be religious teachers of others, for all who are entangled in the controversies of the present, there are no better words to be remembered than these, viewed in their original and immediate application. They are the true answer to all perplexities about Ecclesiastes and Solomon: they are no less the true answer to all perplexities about human life itself.

But you can do more than this: you can turn to the Bible, as a treasury of Divine Instruction, and teach them out of it. The Lord's Prayer is there, with its simple petitions, which the child can understand, while the hoary-headed saint can never exhaust their meaning. The Psalms are there, which tell how men lived and laboured, and longed after God and were suffered to find Him, in the ages long ago as now. The lives of good men and true are there,—with all their patient faith, their noble self-sacrifice, their joyous confidence, their sure belief in the final triumph of God and His Truth,—though checkered, it is true, with signs of human infirmity. Above all, the history of Christ himself is there, with its calm serene trust in the ever-present help of His Heavenly Father, with its purity and goodness, its holy hatred of sin, its pitiful compassion for the sinner, its boundless love to God and Man, exhibited in life and sealed in death. And you will find enough in all these, if you are faithful, to help you to do God's Work and speak God's Word in your families, to 'bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' You can do this while you let them gradually receive the light of the present age, as God in His Providence shall send it to them,—in the reading of books, in the hearing of sermons, in the converse of friends, in the musings of their own hearts. You can aid them to draw from the Scripture narratives the rich lessons

which they contain for our spiritual support and comfort, without therefore being obliged to renounce the reasoning powers, with which their Heavenly Father has blessed them as a part of His own Divine Image, and required to receive as infallible statements of fact what their own eyes see, enlightened by the light which shines around them, to be self-contradictory, incredible, impossible. You can bid them also bend the knee around you in family prayer, and so be the Priest, in your household, as well as the Prophet. And there is no more pleasing sight than when this is regularly done in a well-ordered family. In such a case the right feeling in a Christian Minister, with whatever orders he may be himself invested, would be to reverence the father's Priesthood, and leave it to him, if he will, to lead the family devotions.

For, though the Church of God is doubtless a Family, a 'household of faith,' it does not extinguish, while yet it includes, family orders and distinctions. The latter are indeed more eminently sacred and holy than any Church orders, because they emanate more directly from God. They are not carnal, as some insinuate; they are not of this world; they are the pillars of God's Kingdom, the very foundations of the temple in which the Great Father of all is adored. Natural ties! natural obligations! Beware how any persuade you that these are merely secular and profane, good for a passing purpose, but of the earth, earthy, part only of this vain world, which passes away like a shadow! Shall I tell you what is merely secular and profane?—though it may have also its transitory uses. The desire of as much pleasure, comfort, ease, of as much money, of as much power, as a man can get,—the wish to shine, to be praised, to cut a figure amongst others,—these impulses are too often the slaves of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' which 'are not of the Father, but of the world.' Their uses are to make whips to scourge the indolence of the mere animal nature; they are meant to act as useful servants to oil the wheels of society. But, if the reins are left in their hands, they will hurry it over the precipice. The history of the world shows this in many a page, where the luxury, the pride, the refined sensuality, of an over-civilization, have stifled and destroyed all natural

affections, duties, claims. It was so in the time of the Roman Emperors; it was so in France before the Revolution; and now in our days, it must be feared, it is too much the tendency of modern European civilization, to make light of the most sacred family ties and duties.

But the family, though the foundation, is not the whole of humanity. That consists of many families; and they are meant by the Divine Creator to act and react on one another. Hence, as I have explained on another occasion, the institution of the seven-days' week is marked out for all mankind through the phases of the moon, by natural signs, in the same kind of way, though not so distinctly, as the interchange of day and night. Hence also, in so many different nations, the irresistible impulse which leads men to come together for some kind of religious purpose, either on the new-moons, or more frequently at each successive interval of seven days, which divides the human period. The Sunday Rest—the Sunday Worship is a blessed ordinance of man, to which he has been led by Divine Guidance. Strip it of the mere superstitious notions, which have made it so often a day of misery, or a day of profane and vicious dissipation; and the holy day becomes a holiday, the holiday a holy day, a day of recreation and refreshment for the body, of relaxation and enjoyment for the mind, of quickening stimulus, and devotional fervour and delight for the heart, and soul, and spirit,—and, in all this, of family happiness and cheerful union and communion with our kind, in the presence of Him who is the Great Friend and Father of all. And so, as the writer to the Hebrews says—

'Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.'

But, in order to have united worship, some must be chosen to preside, and keep order, and lead the rest in their devotions. The office, then, of teacher or *prophet* will not always coincide with that of 'priest,' or with that of 'presbyter' or 'elder,' but will devolve upon those who may have the divine gifts of insight and utterance combined. Amongst the Hebrews we see one tribe, the Levites, exclusively set apart for the priesthood: while prophets arose here and there, as the Spirit of the Living God inspired them, and sometimes, as we have seen

already, among the priests. So in the early Church there were 'helps' and 'governments,' that is, persons who assisted in managing and ordering the affairs of the community, as well as 'prophets' and 'teachers,' 1Cor.xii. 28: there were 'elders that ruled,' as well as others who 'laboured in the word and doctrine'; and these last were counted 'worthy of double honour,' or, rather, of double remuneration for their services. In our own Church there was a time, when the office of the Curate or Parish Priest was distinct from that of the Teacher. Thus the 46th Canon prescribes as follows:—

Every beneficed man, *not allowed to be a Preacher*, shall procure sermons to be preached in his cure once in every month at the least by preachers *lawfully licensed*, if his living, in the judgment of the Ordinary, will be able to bear it. And upon every Sunday, when there shall not be a sermon preached in his cure, he or his curates shall read some one of the homilies prescribed or to be prescribed by authority, to the intents aforesaid.

And again it is added in the 49th Canon:—

No person whatever, *not examined and approved by the Bishop of the diocese*, or *not licensed*, as is aforesaid, *for a sufficient or convenient preacher*, shall take upon him to expound in his own cure, or elsewhere, any Scripture or matter of doctrine; but shall only study to read plainly and aptly (without glossing or adding) the homilies already set forth, or hereafter to be published by lawful authority, for the confirmation of the true faith, and for the good instruction and edification of the people.

And further it is laid down in the 43rd Canon, which treats of 'Deans and Prebendaries':—

And in case they themselves be sick or lawfully absent, they shall substitute such *licensed preachers* to supply their turns, as by the Bishop of the diocese shall be thought meet to preach in cathedral churches. And, if any otherwise neglect or omit to supply his course, as is aforesaid, the offender shall be punished by the Bishop, or by him or them to whom the jurisdiction of that church appertaineth, according to the quality of the offence.

It has been very much the fashion of late, with a certain school of thought in the Church of England, to speak slightly of the office of the Preacher, and to regard the sermon as merely a secondary consideration, as altogether subordinate to the prayers. For the Priest to offer the prayers of the congregation, or his own prayers on their behalf, *that* was of the utmost importance—much more that he should offer the superstitious sacrifice, which is fast being substituted in the place of the Mass, only at

last (it may be feared) to make way for the return, virtually, of the Mass itself. But the preaching was of very little consequence, and might almost be dispensed with altogether. You see how differently our Church at the Reformation lays down the law on this point. No one was even allowed to preach in ordinary Churches,—not even though ordained to be a Minister, and holding a Benefice,—who did not possess the necessary *learning* to warrant his being entrusted with this duty. None but a duly licensed Minister could preach in a country Church; and in a Cathedral Church not every duly licensed Minister, but only such as were approved by the Bishop of the diocese. But were the Country Clergy, because they were in Priests' orders, regarded as competent to supply all the wants of their cures? Was it enough that they could baptize, and marry, and bury,—that they could read the Church Prayers on Weekdays and Sundays, and 'offer,' as some teach in the present day, 'Christ's Body and Blood' in the Holy Communion? Did our Church show, when her Canons were framed, such contempt or disregard for the office of the Preacher, that she was quite content to provide each parish with the services of a Priest? Far from it! We have seen that Deans and Canons of Cathedral Churches were to be punished by the Bishop, if they did not do their best to provide efficient preachers, to be approved by the Bishop, when they were at any time sick or lawfully absent from their duties. And each country Vicar or Rector was bound also to secure for the edification of his flock a duly licensed preacher once a month, if his living could afford it, and on all other Sundays to read in their hearing, by himself or by one of his curates, one of the Church Homilies. It was well understood *in those days* that the Prophet was of the utmost importance to the religious well-being and progress of the people, as important, at least, as the Priest,—and that they were often not joined in one. It was felt *then* that adequate learning, training, education, was needed to make the Preacher, which was not so necessary for the Priest. It was not then supposed that the mere admission into the order of deacons or priests was enough to entitle a man to stand up in the pulpit, and harangue his fellow-men upon their duties and their beliefs, or to

protect him from the charge of arrogance, in sitting down to condemn the writings of his seniors and superiors in the ministry, writings which he may have never read and may be incapable of reading.

Still the priest or rather the ruling presbyter is needed in the Christian Church—the officiating minister, as well as the prophet. It is well to have brought before us regularly, by outward signs, by visible and audible intimations, those claims and duties of our higher life, which, in the midst of this life's bustle and excitement and engrossing cares and anxieties, we are so prone to forget. The 'sound of the church-going bell,'—the summons to praise and prayer,—the provision made for the due and orderly admission of our little ones into the Church of Christ by Holy Baptism,—the invitation to draw near together, as children of God's Family, to confess our sins and shortcomings, and renew our vows at the Holy Table,—the opportunities of joining, with heart and soul, with one mind and one mouth, in singing the words, which have expressed the feelings of the most devout saints in all ages, and of hearing the records, left to us by the piety of ancient times, venerable with the rime of twenty or thirty centuries,—all these help greatly to maintain alive in us the remembrance of our high calling; they take us out of the world which passes away, into the region of eternal realities. We should go back from Church, if it yielded us no more than this, sobered and solemnized,—it may be, refreshed, and strengthened, and comforted,—unless we came to it with a careless, indifferent, irreverent spirit. And for this the ordained minister will suffice, even if he have not 'a tongue like the pen of a ready writer,' or an education which fits him to instruct and edify an intelligent congregation by his own compositions, on a level with the requirements of a thoughtful and inquiring age.

For such purposes as these, the institution of the Diaconate and Priesthood exists in our National Church. But as in all human things, while the principle, the idea, is Divine, the form in which it appears is necessarily imperfect, and tends to decay and degradation, so has this ordinance of the ministry,—of certain persons set apart for the service of the Sanctuary, to lead the devotions of the rest, or, according to the Jewish form of devotion, to offer sacri-

fices for the people,—been degraded into the notion of a sanctity in the *Priest*, differing in kind, or at least in degree, from that which belonged, which was the inheritance, of the *People*. We see how in the days of our Lord the whole body of the Priests rejected him and his Divine teaching. We know how, in the parable of the good Samaritan, he himself represents the Priest and the Levite as passing by on the other side, when they came to the place where a suffering fellow-creature lay. We may therefore conclude that at that time they had forgotten their true mission, to serve their brethren in holy things, and were looking on their office, not as a more awful obligation to cherish personal purity, charity, and love of truth, but as something which in itself gave them a right to say, in their own language in their days, what some say in ours—‘Stand thou there in the body of the Church! Come not near to us, in the Chancel! for we, as Priests, are holier than thou.’

In the kingdom of the Son of Man, as the outward rite of sacrifice was abolished, so also the Priest, who was the agent in it, disappears. Our whole spirit, soul, and body, is henceforth our offering, and each one, therefore, must of necessity be his own Priest. The ‘fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name,’—the sweet savour of our daily lives, bringing praise to God,—is the true incense, and the fumes of myrrh and frankincense become unmeaning. Instead of the Priest, there remains now the Christian *Minister* or servant of the congregation; while the people at large are the ‘royal Priesthood,’ the members of that head, who ‘sprang out of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe nothing was spoken concerning Priesthood.’ How great is this privilege, the birthright of every Christian, the inheritance into which our Lord has introduced us, the liberty of children wherewith Christ has made us free,—that we may each approach without fear the presence of our God, enter into our closet, and shut the door, and pray to ‘our Father’ in secret! Not, indeed, that the saints of the Old Testament might not speak in prayer to Jehovah, the Living God—but it was to One whom they had not been taught, as we have, to look upon as ever near, whose Word is the Light and Life of our hearts, in whom we live and move and have our being. He was present



indeed, they thought, at Jerusalem : He dwelt between the cherubim : He manifested Himself, from time to time, in oracular utterances or in mysterious visions. But he was still to be approached, in the ordinary way, only or mainly through the Priest. There were exceptions to this, no doubt; and Prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, inveighed against the folly of those sacrifices which the Priest performed, while the people's heart was absent, busied with their sinful pleasures and thievish practices, and their hands full of blood. They taught a more spiritual religion in the place of one of rites and ceremonies,—that God will 'meet' him 'that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,'—that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God hath prepared for them that wait for Him.' But for the mass of the people God was still approached through the Priest: such was their idea of their relations to the Highest, of the relation of Man to his Creator. But to us 'the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is True, and we are in Him that is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ.' In fellowship with Christ we have fellowship with the Father, his Father and our Father, his God and our God. Manifested by him, we know the Living God as our Father and Friend, as a Spirit to whom all places are alike, whose dwelling is the pure heart, who hears the sighings of even the prodigal, and hastens to meet the returning penitent.

How is it, then, that the Christian ministry should have assumed to itself the title of priesthood? We hear nothing in apostolic times of any functions appropriate to it, which are parallel to those of the Jewish priesthood. In the apostolic epistles, 'elders' are occasionally mentioned, as we have seen—some, whose duty it was to rule, others, to 'labour in the word and doctrine.' Nothing whatever is said in them of sacraments to be administered by them alone—of 'keys of the kingdom of heaven' to be kept in their hands. We should never discover from apostolic precepts that without baptism performed by one of apostolic descent no soul could be saved, or that the memorial-feast of love, the bread, the cup of blessing, was only to be celebrated, when some apostolically ordained person was present, to represent him by whom the rite was instituted.

Christ himself, in his last prayer, makes no distinction between any as his 'priests' and all who should believe 'in his name' through the word of his first witnesses. In one word, the idea of a sacred class, sacred not by virtue of real holiness, of purity of heart and lips, of a rich inner wealth of wisdom and love, but by the possession of (so-called) spiritual—rather magical—gifts, and by their office alone intrusted with tremendous powers over the souls of their fellow-men,—the idea of such a class is altogether alien to the spirit of his teaching, who said to his disciples, 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.'

We see easily, however, how, while this notion of the priesthood tends to undue exaltation and spiritual pride in those who adopt it, so the favourite dogma, often held with it, often enforced by means of it, that Christianity has said her last word, that there is nothing to be added, nothing that can ever be added, to the circle of religious truth,—that certain formulæ easily acquired, easily retained, contain all that need or can be known, on the highest subjects which concern the soul,—favours the natural indolence of the human mind, and reduces those who hold it to a state of intellectual apathy. But *words*, especially when they are employed upon things spiritual, inscrutable to sense, are but the faintest reflections of realities. The truth needs ever to be born again in the speech of the living generation, if it is to be living truth for them. Nothing that is true, nothing that is real and permanent, will fall away; but much, that was a temporary, imperfect, medium for conveying it, will and must pass away and perish. We know how, at the time of the Reformation, the pure spring cleared itself, and issued from the foul morass, in which it was almost lost. But let us not imagine that a standing water will ever long remain pure.

We must not, therefore, too much lament the differences and dissensions amongst us. Differences there must be, from the different points of view under which the same truths—eternally and substantially the same—are regarded by men of different mental powers, training, or circumstances. Let us hope that the bitter feelings, which they engender, are in some cases at least a sign of life, of real care and love for what each esteems to be the truth. Better this than a mere careless spirit of unconcern! In

all times, in fact, when there has been a rousing of religious feeling, a return to reality after torpor and indifference, many have thought that they did God service by persecuting those who differed from them. For ourselves, let us remember him who rebuked his disciples, when they wished to call down fire from heaven on those who rejected him. The truth, the truth of God, must in the end prevail, whether we live or not to see its triumph, in the hearts and minds of our fellow-men. Meanwhile, the most implicit acquiescence in the teaching of the wisest should only be regarded by a truth-loving, truth-seeking man, as the *preparation* for wisdom. We cannot take our creeds whole and ready-made into our minds like an article of furniture. We must shape them for ourselves with mental toil and labour. Or, rather, the Word of God must be not only 'learned and marked,' but 'inwardly digested' by the acting of our own minds, the experience of our own hearts and lives, upon it, before it can pass into the very substance of our souls, and become their life.

Hence the need in the teachers of the people of activity of mind, of some research into the past, of some acquaintance with the literature, the science, the modes of thought, of the age. Hence the inefficacy of a ministry which merely enunciates dogmas, instead of calling out, sympathizing with, and guiding, the thoughts of the hearers. For, if the wisdom of the wisest will not avail us, till we have made it our own by patient meditation, what must it be to have for guides the ignorant, the unwise, such as would lead us back to old superstitions, to the worship of the Virgin and of the consecrated elements, to the anathemas and excommunications of the dark ages, to belief in the infallible truth of every statement in the Bible, and a slavish reverence for the dicta of the priest?

No! 'there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding.' Beware then, you that are blessed with knowledge more than others, and rejoice in the light and freedom of the age, how you misuse that Divine Gift, to excuse yourselves in things which your hearts condemn. Beware lest the light that is in you become thus darkness: for how great will then be that darkness! But think how great an incubus an unlearned clergy must be upon the mind of this generation—at least, of those sub-

ject to their influence!—how little power they can have to meet the passing events of the present hour, to guide the restless, inquiring minds of the young! Should the ministers of Christ, instead of leading the armies of the faith, continue to ensconce themselves behind the old decaying walls of mere traditionary teaching, treating as serious facts and realities the stories and myths, under the covering of which truths in themselves Divine were conveyed to the younger world, remaining contentedly ignorant of all the labours of the present century, and counselling the like ignorance to their flocks, what grievous injury may ensue to the faith of multitudes, who will hear continually from those in the teacher's place the cuckoo-cry, 'If you listen to criticism, you will lose your Christianity, your Religion, your God!'—while at the same time the light of Modern Science, becoming brighter every day, and throwing its beams into every corner, makes it impossible for any thinking, well-informed man to retain any longer faith in many dogmas of the traditionary creed. A learned ministry is a crying necessity of every age. It is especially so of this age, which is one of transition, a reformation-period, in which old authority is weakened, and each one is called to 'try the spirits' for himself,—when the rise in the level of general intelligence is so great and perhaps so sudden, that any class, which clings resolutely to the past, is apt to be left behind—the teachers behind the taught!—to the discredit, alas! of that which is really true in what they hold.

No! the office of prophet or teacher, which in these days is most commonly combined with that of minister in the Christian congregation, is not to be rashly undertaken, in the hope that the wide mantle of the office will cover the defects of the individual. Some gifts, at least, from above, some natural powers not below the average, may reasonably be required in him, and by diligence and culture may be made available, in many parts of God's field, for the feeding of His Flock. He will need them, if he would do his duty, when required, as a Christian pastor, to come to the help of those, whose lives are consumed in worldly business, that they may gain a truer insight into the things which concern their peace here and their hopes of a hereafter,—to disinter by diligent study the essence and kernel of the

teaching of Christ and his apostles from the fables and the forms, under which the tradition of bygone centuries of ignorance and superstition has hidden it, and to which even in this day some are seeking to bring us back again into bondage,—to answer questions and doubts, or at least to assuage their painful pressure by the sympathy of a more robust faith, instead of repelling them with an authoritative ‘It is written!’ which is a mere cloak for ignorance, a prohibition of inquiry,—or by a warning to go no further, as if an honest and patient search would issue in the terrible discovery, that there is no God, no Father, no ‘Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe,’ no Divine Fellowship, into which the weary soul may enter and be blest! The faithful minister of Jesus Christ must indeed not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ. He must hold out Christ’s example of self-sacrificing humility and love, to all those who would follow in his steps and share his crown. But he must not be afraid of the light, which God has shed around both His Works and His Word in the present day. We need not fear the result for all that we should hold most dear, for all that is most essential to us. ‘The idols’—whatever they may be—‘He shall utterly abolish’: but ‘the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.’

## XXIV.

### THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 20, 1866.

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ACTS II. 11.

'WE DO HEAR THEM SPEAK IN OUR TONGUES THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD.'

WHAT was the exact nature of that extraordinary event, which we celebrate at this time in the Church as the 'gift of tongues'? That there was something in the early Church, something real and remarkable, which is indicated by this expression, cannot be doubted. For we find the Apostle Paul distinctly saying, 'I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all,' 1Cor.xiv.18. It is plain then that he refers here to some strange power which existed, to some peculiar faculty which was exercised, even at the time when he wrote, perhaps thirty years after the day of Pentecost of which the text is speaking. What was this 'gift of tongues'? It is a question this, which must often, I think, have presented itself to many a thoughtful mind among you; and I shall endeavour this morning to answer it as best I can, reserving to the evening some practical considerations which the subject suggests.

I suppose that the notion most commonly entertained as to the nature of this gift of tongues,—among those, at least, who have not studied the question, and have not given any thought to the difficulties with which it is attended,—will be this, that the apostles on the day of Pentecost were endued with a miraculous power of speaking in different languages, which they had never learned, in order that they might thus be enabled to go 'forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' But,

whatever may have been the gift itself, it is easy to see that this cannot possibly have been the object for which it was given.

For, in the first place, it was not needed. In those days, Greek was the language spoken generally within the bounds of the Roman Empire, to which the labours of the apostles were almost entirely confined. As Dean Stanley has observed (*Corinthians*, p.260):—

Probably in no age of the world has such a gift—*viz.* that of speaking foreign languages—been less needed. The chief sphere of the Apostles must have been within the Roman Empire; and within that sphere Greek or Latin, but especially Greek, must have been everywhere understood.

Accordingly, the story in the Acts proceeds to tell us that St Peter addressed the whole assembled multitude of Jews and Proselytes, who had come up to keep the Feast at Jerusalem 'from every nation under heaven,' in the Greek language; and he appears to have been readily understood by all of them. If it be said that perhaps we have not his actual address recorded, but only a *translation* from it into Greek, yet at any rate, he must, of course, have spoken in some one tongue, which was understood by all: he did not surely speak the same words in a variety of different languages. And, if so, that one tongue would most probably have been either the Greek, which was the common language for all who heard him, as French would be to some extent on the continent of Europe at the present day, or, perhaps, the Syriac, the common tongue of Palestine, since St Peter more particularly addresses in his discourse 'the men of Judæa and all them that dwelt at Jerusalem,' *v.*14.

Then, again, we do not find that the apostles did actually make use of foreign tongues in speaking or writing to their different flocks. St Paul on one occasion spoke, we are told, to the Jews living at Jerusalem 'in the Hebrew tongue,' Acts xxi.40;—

'and when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence.' xxiii.2.

This, which is here called the 'Hebrew,' was really the 'Syriac' tongue, at that time spoken, as I have said, in Palestine: and, consequently, the words here ascribed to St Paul in our Greek Testaments were not his own actual words, but only a translation of them,—a reminiscence of

his speech, expressed in the Greek tongue. And it is well to remember that this is also true of all the discourses ascribed to our Lord himself. There is no doubt that Jesus spoke always the Syriac, the vernacular language of Palestine. And therefore we have nowhere, in the original Gospels, the very words of Christ, but only a reminiscence of them in Greek, except one or two instances, where the actual Syriac words are given, as when he cried upon the cross, '*Eli! Eli!*' or as another Gospel gives it, '*Eloi! Eloi! luma sabaothani!*' that is, 'My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me'?

But, although St Paul on this occasion, addressing a multitude of the Jews of Jerusalem, who all spoke habitually the Syriac tongue, made use of it to show that he, too, was a brother of the race, a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews,' and so hoped to win his way to their hearts, we do not find that he wrote his epistles in the languages of the people to whom he addressed them. He did not write to 'all that were in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints,' in Latin, nor to the churches of Galatia in the peculiar dialect of that barbarous province. Barbarous as they were—a colony of Galli or Gauls, settled in Asia Minor—they appear to have understood the Greek tongue. At any rate his epistles, as Dean Stanley observes,—

were all written in Greek, though many of them were addressed to the very nations whose presence is described in the Acts on that occasion [of the day of Pentecost]—the people of Judæa, Cappadocia, Asia, Phrygia, and the dwellers at Rome. When the Lycaonians addressed Paul and Barnabas in the speech of Lycaonia, there is no mention of Paul and Barnabas answering them in that language.

So, too, the other epistles—those ascribed to Peter, John, James, and Jude, by whomsoever really written, for the apostolic origin of some of them, as you know, is very doubtful—were all written in *Greek*. So Claudius Lysias, the Roman chief-captain at Jerusalem, writes a letter to the Governor Felix in *Greek*; and Tertullus, the Roman lawyer, whom the Jews had engaged to plead their cause before the Governor against Paul, addresses Felix in *Greek*; and, no doubt, St Paul's speech before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, was also made in *Greek*. In *Greek* the learned Jew, Philo, wrote all his voluminous works; in *Greek* Josephus composed his histories. In short, *Greek* was then the common language of the civilized world, and would have



been understood by most of the motley crowd of Jews and Proselytes, who came to Jerusalem to worship from the different provinces of the Roman Empire—

‘Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.’

Whatever may have been the case with the common people, who were settled as inhabitants in those districts, yet the travellers, ‘Jews and Proselytes,’ who came up from those parts to Jerusalem, would understand Greek, and must have understood it, if St Peter spoke to them in Greek on this occasion. The quotations in the New Testament are habitually made from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures; and, doubtless, out of such a copy was the Ethiopian Eunuch reading the prophet Isaiah, as he sat in his chariot returning from Jerusalem.

And, once more, we know, as a fact, that the apostles did not possess the knowledge of all manner of languages, whether imparted to them in this marvellous way, or not. There is a well-known very ancient tradition, that Mark was ‘the interpreter of St Peter.’ If there is any truth in this tradition, it seems to imply that for some purpose or other St Mark’s greater skill in languages was needed to translate St Peter’s words. So, again, Jerome records a tradition that St Paul was accompanied by Titus as a helper,—

‘because he could not express in befitting language of the Greek tongue the majesty of the Divine meanings.’

And these very traditions, at all events, as one has well observed (Prof. Plumptre, *Dict. of the Bible*, III.p. 1587—

must at least be received as testimonies, that the age, which was nearest to the phenomena, did not take the same view of them as those have done who lived at a greater distance.

But, however this may be, we see that the Greek which the Apostles used was by no means *pure Greek*, such as, we must believe, would have resulted from a miraculous gift such as is commonly supposed. It is utterly unlike the true Greek of Greek writers. Some parts of the New Testament are further removed from the standard of purity than others. But all are written in what is called *Hellenistic* Greek, which, though certainly intelligible to true-

born Greeks, would not be regarded by them as genuine utterances in their own tongue, such as would bespeak a supernatural Divine Instructor. Thus a well-known Commentator speaks of the 'phraseology' of the Book of the Revelations as—

receding from all rules of Greek usage, though quite reconcilable with those of Hebrew. *Bloomfield, Gr. Test.*, II.p.647.

And a learned Bishop of our Church has written (Dr Francis Hare, Bishop of Chichester, 1746, *Difficulties and Discouragements of Reading the Scriptures* :—

The language even of the New Testament is not to be understood with so little pains as is commonly imagined. It is learnt indeed in schools, and from hence thought to be the easiest Greek that can be read: but they, who have read it in another manner than schoolboys, know it to be quite otherwise. Not to mention the difficulties peculiar to St Paul, whose epistles are a very great part of the New Testament, Plato and Demosthenes are in many respects not so hard as even the easier books. The style, indeed, in the historical books is plain and simple; but, for all that, even those parts have their difficulty. And the whole is written in a language peculiar to the Jews; the idiom is Hebrew or Syriac, though the words be Greek,—which makes some knowledge of those languages still necessary.

For these reasons, then, if we had no other evidence, we should conclude that, whatever this gift itself may have been, it cannot have been intended, as the Rev. Thos. Scott says,—

to qualify the apostles and first preachers of the gospel for their important service, to which their want of learning would have otherwise been an insurmountable hindrance.

They appear to have spoken only, besides their native Syriac, an impure, provincial, dialect of Greek,—such as they may have gathered by constant contact with foreigners; and even Paul, the most learned of the apostles, gives no indication of being master of any other tongues than Greek and Hebrew,—if, indeed, he can be said to have 'mastered' the Greek, when his style is often so obscure, so cramped and difficult to be understood, that even Greek commentators, like St Chrysostom, are puzzled to explain his meaning, and have plainly at times mistaken it,—not to speak of the necessity, as this learned Bishop says, of the reader having some knowledge also of Hebrew or Syriac, in order to comprehend his phraseology. It is surely impossible to believe that such an imperfect knowledge of Greek as this corresponds to the idea of a Divine

gift of language, than which, as Mr Scott says very truly—

a more stupendous miracle can scarcely be imagined; as every one must perceive who carefully considers the subject, and recollects with what difficulty an adult person acquires the accurate knowledge and pronunciation even of one language, so as to speak it with propriety and without hesitation.

And when he adds—

The persons, therefore, whom the Lord saw good to employ in propagating the Christian religion among the nations, and who were acquainted with foreign languages, could have made no progress in their work, without this special gift, or something equivalent to it,—

it is obvious to reply, that it appears from the narrative in the Acts that the apostles themselves did *not* suppose that the gift, whatever it was, was bestowed upon them for this purpose. For nearly ten years elapsed before Peter was taught, by the vision which he saw upon the housetop, that the Gentile Cornelius, and others like him, were to be received into the Church—that ‘God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.’

What, then, we must ask, did St Paul mean by saying—

‘I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all’?

We will examine into this by considering the various passages, in which St Paul himself speaks of this ‘gift of tongues.’ And this, let me observe, is a much more satisfactory mode of settling the matter, as far as it can be settled, than by appealing to portions of the history as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. For, in weighing the latter, we have to inquire first when the account itself was written,—at the same time with the events described? or perhaps at a later age, when many long years had passed, and the real actors in the scene had died, and many parts of the early history of Christianity had been already corrupted by legendary additions, as we have seen in various instances? Whereas the letters of St Paul place us amidst the very facts to which they refer, and will enable us, I imagine, to form a tolerably clear judgment as to the real nature of this particular spiritual gift, which is called ‘speaking with tongues.’

(i) In the first place, we may observe, that if St Paul, as he says himself, ‘spoke with tongues’ more than all, and

yet appears to have made use of no language but Greek (except it may be Syriac) in speaking or writing to the different churches which he founded, and that a very impure and irregular Greek,—it is sufficiently plain that this ‘speaking with tongues,’ in which he so greatly surpassed others, whatever it may have been, can hardly have been a speaking fluently and intelligibly,—‘with propriety and without hesitation,’—in various languages, for the purpose of instructing and edifying the Church.

(ii) Then, secondly, we note that he speaks rather slightly, in comparison with other gifts, of the exercise of this particular faculty :—

‘I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all : yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.’

He would surely not have said this, if he had the power of uttering intelligibly ‘ten thousand words’ in the languages of Northern Europe, India, and China, so as to carry conviction to the hearts of the inhabitants of those distant regions, and shed the Light of Life upon the eyes of heathen men, yet ‘sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death.’

(iii) Nor does it appear that those, who exercised the gift in question, did speak intelligibly to those who heard them. St Paul implies this plainly in several places.

‘He, that speaketh in a tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God : for *no man understandeth him* : howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth (or preacheth) speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort. He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself ; but he that prophesieth edifieth the Church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied ; for greater is he that prophesieth (that is, preacheth) than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.’

But, surely, if the power to speak with tongues enabled the persons so gifted to go out into far distant foreign lands, and preach the Gospel to their fellow-men, St Paul would hardly have said that he, that preacheth in his own native tongue, is greater than he that speaketh in a foreign tongue. He would rather have bidden these men, endowed with such marvellous powers, to make use of them for the purpose for which they were given. He would have exhorted them to leave father and mother, house and home, if possible, and go forth as the glad heralds of salvation, to

the work for which they were expressly endowed, though they sacrificed the goods of this life by so doing, and shared their Master's cross before sharing his crown. Whereas, on the contrary, whenever the 'speaking with tongues' is mentioned, there is not one single reference of any kind to that gift being ever used, or capable of being ever used, for instructing and enlightening the heathen.

Nay, it would rather seem from St Paul's language that those who spoke with tongues did not even speak intelligibly to *themselves*, or did not generally do so, unless they had also the gift of 'interpreting' the words they uttered.

'Except ye utter by the tongue a significant speech, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye will be speaking into the air. . . . Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian unto me. . . . Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For, if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but *my understanding is unfruitful*.'

(iv) The result of all this appears to have been that the general effect of the exercise of this 'gift' in the Church was to produce merely wonderment, and not unfrequently confusion, among the hearers.

'If the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?'

'If any man speak in a tongue, let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church; and let him speak to himself and to God.'

'Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and *forbid not* to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.'

You see how cautiously St Paul speaks on this point: 'forbid not' to speak with tongues. He does not venture to suppress altogether these peculiar utterances. But he does not encourage them; he absolutely forbids them, unless there be some one present—the speaker himself or some other—to 'interpret' the meaning of what is said.

I think that we shall now be in a position to understand more clearly what was the real nature of this gift of tongues. It is very noticeable that in none of his Epistles does St Paul make any reference whatever to this faculty, except in writing to the Church of Corinth. In this famous Church, planted by St Paul himself in that wealthy and luxurious city, much party-spirit and much excited feeling

prevailed, coupled, as might be expected, with a great want of true Christian Charity, and with not a little looseness of life and open licentiousness. Accordingly, St Paul in his first Epistle, while recognizing that they were singularly endowed with spiritual gifts,—‘in every thing enriched, in all utterance and in all knowledge,’—has yet to reprove them very severely, to warn them very solemnly, to tell them that they were ‘puffed up’ with pride, self-conceit, and self-sufficiency, to demand of them ‘Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?’ to say to this highly-privileged Church, filled at that time with a complacent spirit of self-exaltation—

‘Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.’

And to this same Church it is that he depreciates so much the importance of this ‘gift of tongues.’ In his catalogue of spiritual powers, he puts it last of all :—

‘God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles, secondly, prophets (that is, preachers), thirdly, teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, *diversities of tongues*.

‘Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all *speak with tongues*? do all interpret?’ 1Cor.xii.28-30.

And once more he gives in another part of the same chapter a long list of spiritual gifts and graces, and in this also, evidently with set purpose, he places the ‘gift of tongues’ at the end of all, as of the least importance, and not to be desired in comparison with many other much more common gifts.

‘To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *kinds of tongues*; to another the interpretation of tongues.’ 1Cor.xii.8-10.

And now remember that in no other of his epistles does St Paul make any reference at all to this power,—not even in his second long epistle to the same Church, when he writes to them with tender affection, pouring out his heart towards them, after he had heard of the salutary effect produced by his first letter :—

‘O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged . . . Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying

of you. I am filled with comfort ; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.'

Nor does any other of the epistles of the N.T., those of James and Peter, John and Jude, make the slightest reference to any such a power existing in the early Church. Nor is any mention whatever made of such a gift by any of the earlier Fathers of the Church, till we come to the time of Irenæus, who died in the year A.D. 202, and who says (*Adv. Hær.* v.6) that there were brethren in his time, 'who had prophetic gifts and spoke through the Spirit in all kinds of tongues.' And then, as one has written, Prof. Plumptre, *Dict. of the Bible*, III.p.1560,—

After this, within the Church, we lose nearly all traces of them. The mention of them (on Ps.xlvi.) by Eusebius (340 A.D.) is vague and uncertain. The tone in which Chrysostom (407 A.D.) speaks of them (on 1Cor.xiv.) is that of one who feels the whole subject to be obscure, because there are no phenomena within his own experience at all answering to it. The whole tendency of the Church was to maintain reverence and order, and to repress all approaches to the ecstatic state. Those who yielded to it took refuge, as in the case of Tertullian, in sects outside the Church. *Symptoms of what was then looked on as an evil showed themselves in the 4th century at Constantinople,—wild, inarticulate cries, words passionate, but of little meaning, almost convulsive gestures,—and were met by Chrysostom with the sternest possible reproof.*

With such absence of all satisfactory evidence of the existence of such supernatural gifts in the post-apostolic time, it is impossible to lay any stress on the single testimony of Irenæus. There may have been many instances of the same unnatural excitement in his time, as two centuries afterwards in the time of Chrysostom, which deserved to be checked and censured, instead of commended. We know, in fact, that Irenæus himself had to learn, as any modern missionary, the language of the people of Gaul, among whom he was stationed as Bishop. But, if in later days enthusiasm and excitement produced such effects, how can we doubt that the same elements were at work also in that disorderly Church of Corinth in St Paul's time? It is plain from all his expressions that he almost feared this. He was absent from his flock ; he could not, or would not, come to them immediately ; he would rather send a letter of rebuke, and wait to see its effect upon them. But he had evidently heard that there were many among them pretending to extraordinary spiritual

gifts,—not such as were useful for the purpose of edifying, but such as made those who exhibited them conspicuous, and brought no profit to the Church. He could not undertake to say that these pretensions were unreal, the fruit only of excited and enthusiastic feelings, such as Chrysostom afterwards had occasion to reprove, and such as we also have known among modern devotees, not only in heathen lands, but among Christian communities, and especially a few years ago in a London congregation, under one of the most eminent Scotch Pastors of the age. I may quote a passage from the record left by one of the persons who fell under this influence, and was supposed to have had the ‘gift of tongues.’

Whilst sitting at home, a mighty power came upon me, but for a considerable time no impulse to utterance. Presently, a sentence in French was vividly set before my mind, and, under an impulse to utterance, was spoken. Then, in a little time, sentences in Latin were in like manner uttered, and, with short intervals, sentences in many other languages, judging from sound, and the different exercise of the enunciating organs. My wife, who was with me, declared some of them to be Italian and Spanish; the first she can read and translate, the second she knows but little of. In this case she was not able to interpret, nor retain the words as they were uttered. All the time of these utterances I was greatly tried in mind. After the first sentence, an impulse to utterance continued on me, and most painfully I restrained it, my conviction being that, until something was set before me to utter, I ought not to yield my tongue to utterance. Yet I was troubled by the doubt—‘What could the impulse mean, if I were not to yield to it?’ Under the trial I did yield my tongue for a few moments; but the utterance that broke from me seemed so discordant, that I concluded that the impulse, without words given, was a temptation, and I restrained it, except as words were given me, and then I yielded. Sometimes single words were given me and sometimes sentences, though I could neither recognize the words nor sentences as any language I knew, except those which were French or Latin.

Here then were excellent persons, fully persuaded that these were Divine gifts, and their minister, as you know, himself believed as fully in the reality of these phenomena. We in our day have no difficulty in concluding that the whole of them were due to a state of religious excitement, unnatural and undesirable—very hurtful indeed to the true spiritual life. It can hardly be doubted that something of the same kind took place at Corinth, which was reported to the Apostle, and caused him much anxiety, though he could not undertake to pronounce it an



entire delusion. He does what he can, therefore, to check their eagerness for these manifestations of spiritual power. He says—

‘Inasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek ye that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.’

Desire that ye may be able to prophesy or preach, rather than to speak with tongues; or, if any speak in a tongue, let him pray that he may interpret also, so that what he says may really benefit the Church. ‘Wherefore covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.’ But remember withal that, though a man speak with the tongues of men and of angels,—though he have prophecy, the power of preaching, and can understand all mysteries and all knowledge,—though he have a liberal hand, and bestow largely of his goods to feed the poor,—though he have all zeal, so as not only to give the bodies of others to the stake, as many are ready enough to do, but to sacrifice his own body also, or his own highest worldly interests, for the maintenance of his creed,—yet, with all these gifts and endowments of the Spirit, he is nothing, ‘as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,’ if he have not above all charity, the true spirit of a Christian,—long-suffering, kind, free from envy, self-glorification, self-conceit, self-display, self-seeking,—not ready to take offence or impute evil,—not pleased with the falls and frailties of others, but sympathizing what is good, wherever it is found, ‘bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.’

But what, then, does St Paul mean by saying that he himself ‘spoke with tongues more than they all’? The original Greek is variously translated by different interpreters. But those very ‘orthodox’ commentators of the present day upon ‘the Life and Epistles of St Paul’ (Conybeare and Howson) render the words thus—‘I offer thanksgivings to God *in private*, speaking in tongues to him, more than any of you.’ The words ‘in private’ are not indeed expressed in the Greek; but they appear to be implied by the apostle’s own words,—‘If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence *in the Church*; and let him speak to himself, *and to God*.’ And so St Paul says—This is what I do: I give thanks to God, in the secret of my own heart, speaking to myself in psalms and hymns

and spiritual songs,—in deep mysterious utterances of the soul, not articulate words of human speech, but voices of the heart, words such as the ‘tongues of angels’ utter. And so he says elsewhere—

‘I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago—(whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell—God knoweth),—such an one caught up to the third heaven: and I knew such a man—(whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell—God knoweth,)—how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard *unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*’

St Paul, in fact, as these words sufficiently indicate, had a great deal of mystical enthusiasm in his character, and, as such, was repeatedly the subject of visions and revelations. And, besides this, he was continually ‘giving thanks’ to God in his heart, in thoughts too deep for human utterances in the strange tongue of the spirit-world, which would not be intelligible to ordinary men. But these ecstatic movements of the soul—these ‘groanings which could not be uttered,’—these bursting songs of praise, which rang through his inner being at times, and carried him almost beside himself, ‘up to the third heaven,’ ‘up into Paradise,’—he suppressed within his bosom, speaking only in silent thought to himself and to God. And he would have his disciples at Corinth do the same, if they felt overpowered by some Divine visitation, and tempted to draw attention to themselves—to make a boast of themselves—by uttering strange sounds, which none could explain, for none could understand. Whatever he might do in private, he would rather in the Church, he says, speak five intelligible words, for the edification of others, than make a display of uttering ten thousand words in ‘a tongue.’ Our E.V. has everywhere ‘an *unknown* tongue.’ But you will find the word ‘unknown’ printed in italics, to show that it does not exist at all in the original: in the Greek it is simply ‘a tongue’ or ‘tongues.’

Such is the true meaning, I believe, of the passages in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which dwell upon this subject of ‘speaking with tongues:’ and this is the only part of all the epistles which makes any distinct reference at all to it. In the Acts we have three places which refer to it. In one it is said that, while Peter was speaking to Cornelius and his friends, and *before* they were baptized,

‘the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,’ and they ‘heard them *speak with tongues* and magnify God,’ x.44,46 ; in another, St Paul lays his hands on certain disciples of John the Baptist, *after* they were baptized, and ‘the Holy Ghost came on them, and they *spake with tongues* and prophesied.’ In these cases, certainly, it cannot be supposed that all those individuals were gifted at once with the astonishing power to speak foreign languages which they had never learned,—much less that they were endowed with this stupendous faculty, in order to be fitted to go as missionaries to heathen lands ; for there is no reason to believe that either Cornelius and all his party, or those disciples of John the Baptist were ever so employed. It is probable that these notices in the Acts are only the reflection of the later age in which they were written, and of the character of the person by whom they were written : and the same may be true of the third account in the Acts, from which the text is taken, the account of what took place on the day of Pentecost. In fact, it is remarkable that St Peter, in the discourse ascribed to him on that occasion, does not make any reference to the variety of languages in which not only the apostles themselves but all the members of the Church, ‘one hundred and twenty souls,’ men, women, and children, are stated to have spoken ; though, indeed, it is difficult to conceive of so many persons all speaking at one time, and speaking in different languages, yet speaking so as to be understood by those who heard them ; for while some said, ‘These men are full of new wine,’—in exact agreement with St Paul’s words, ‘Will they not say that ye are mad?’—we are told that others said, ‘We do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’

There is yet one more passage of Scripture in which the ‘speaking with tongues’ is mentioned—I mean that well-known verse in Mark xvi.17 :—

‘And these signs shall follow them that believe ; in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall *speak with new tongues* ; they shall take up serpents ; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.’

Here, however, it is promised that not only shall the ‘gift of tongues,’ but other miraculous powers be bestowed generally upon ‘them that believe,’—upon all believers

without exception in all ages, not merely upon the apostles or the first disciples. It need hardly be said that this promise has not been realized. But, in fact, as I have already explained on the authority of Dean Alford, there is really no doubt—the present Archbishop of York says ‘it is probable’—that the last twelve verses of St Mark, in which this passage occurs, formed no part of the original Gospel, but are an addition made at a later time, and, as I believe, breathe, like the passages in the Acts, the spirit of the age in which they were written.

Yet if, instead of the *literal* meaning of these words, which is encumbered with the ignorance of the time and of the writer, we take the *spiritual* meaning,—that to which the mind of humanity is ever pointing, for which the heart of humanity is ever sighing,—we shall find living bread for our souls to feed on. The Truth and Being of God, and His ‘wonderful works’ to the children of men, are ever being revealed afresh in the speech of successive generations. Even Gregory the Great of old had a glimpse of this, when he wrote as follows, though his words are tinged with the sacerdotal spirit of the age :—

Because we are not able to do these miracles, are we therefore not among ‘them that believe’? These things were necessary indeed in the beginning of the Church. . . . But the Church does daily in a spiritual manner what it did then by the Apostles in a temporal sense. When the priests lay their hands upon believers by the grace of exorcism, and forbid malignant spirits to dwell in their minds, what else do they do but cast out devils? And all the faithful, who now abandon the words of this world, and utter forth sacred mysteries, these *speaking with new tongues*,—they, who by their good exhortations take away ill-feeling from the hearts of others, these *take up serpents*,—they who, while listening to pestilent counsels, are not in any degree drawn on to evil practice, these *drink what is deadly, but it does not hurt them*,—they, who, when they see their neighbours failing in good works, by the example of their own exertions invigorate their life, these *lay hands upon the sick that they may recover*. Which miracles in fact are so much the greater, inasmuch as they are spiritual, and inasmuch as by these not bodies, but souls, are raised up.

Yes! and not only shall the faith and practice of our fathers, what they knew and believed, what they said and sang, contribute to supply the substance, and to suggest the form, of our hymns of praise; but with ‘new tongues’ are we to praise the Father in this our own day, with wider knowledge of His ways, with insight purified by that knowledge from the errors and superstitions of the past. Still does the

Spirit of God descend upon the children of men, and specially upon His faithful worshippers, His Church Universal, the true in heart and life in every land. Still does faith in the Unseen prevail to the overcoming of all seeming evils and all mortal and immortal enemies, turning poison into medicine, and suffering into discipline, and inspiring the tongues of feeble men with words of Divine Love and Eternal Truth.

## XXV.

### THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 20, 1866.

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ACTS x. 46.

'FOR THEY HEARD THEM SPEAK WITH TONGUES AND MAGNIFY GOD.'

WE were considering this morning what was the real nature of that strange phenomenon, the 'speaking with tongues,' which evidently existed in the early Church, and upon which our Church lays so much stress in connection with the Feast of Whitsunday, which we are this day celebrating. I mentioned that our information upon this subject is derived from three sources—(i) a few words in St Mark's Gospel, which contain the promise that, among 'the signs that shall follow them that believe,' shall be this, that 'they shall speak with new tongues,'—(ii) three passages in the Acts, where instances are given of the exercise of this power of 'speaking with tongues,'—(iii) a remarkable portion of St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, where the apostle distinctly recognizes the fact, that many in that Church professed to exercise this spiritual gift in his day. But, as it has been justly remarked (*Dict. of Bible*, III.p.155)—

It deserves notice that the chronological sequence of these passages, as determined by the date of their composition, is probably just the opposite of that of the periods to which they severally refer.

In other words, this author tells us that St Paul's statements were written before the accounts in the Acts, and these again before the passage in the Gospel; and this remark is of importance in enabling us to judge of the comparative historical value of these different notices. In fact, that in St Mark is known by scholars, and is admitted by the present Archbishop of York (*Dict. of Bible*, II.p.259), to be 'probably' no part of the original Gospel, but a late

addition 'from a different hand,' the last twelve verses having been annexed to the Gospel 'soon after the apostolic time,'—*how* soon after, it is impossible to say. Nor can we fix the age in which the Book of the Acts was compiled, or determine to what extent its narrative has been affected by the thoughts and tendencies of a later age. But in reading St Paul's words we have firm ground to go upon; and I showed that they enabled us to form a pretty clear opinion as to the nature of this practice of 'speaking with tongues,' which existed in the Church of Corinth in his own time. St Paul devotes a whole chapter to this subject; and it is very noticeable, as I observed, that this is the only passage in all the epistles of the New Testament, in which any distinct reference of any kind is made to it. Nor is it mentioned even by any of the Fathers of the Church till we come to the very end of the second century; and then it is only alluded to in one sentence of Irenæus, as a faculty still exercised by some in his own time,—after which we hear no more of it till the end of another century and a half.

It is plain, therefore, that it was not regarded in those days as a very notable gift in the Church; and certainly, whatever it may have been, it was not that which is very commonly supposed, the power of speaking at will in foreign languages, for the conversion of the heathen,—of telling out in their various tongues, without any previous labour spent in acquiring them, the 'wonderful works of God.' I need not repeat now the proofs which I gave this morning from the Bible itself that, in point of fact, the apostles themselves never used such a power,—that, when they did not speak in their own proper tongue, the Syriac, they spoke or wrote always in Greek, the common language which prevailed throughout those parts of the Roman Empire, to which their labours appear to have been confined. And, accordingly, Dean Alford states, *Gr. Test.* II.p.14:—

The idea of a gift of *speaking in various languages* having been conferred *for the dissemination of the Gospel*, appears not to have originated until the gift of tongues itself had some time disappeared from the Church.

I showed, however, that St Paul, in that most interesting chapter, 1Cor.xiv., in which he speaks at great length on this subject, plainly does his best rather to check than to encourage this 'speaking with tongues.' At most he says,

'covet to prophesy,'—that is, desire to be able to preach, to exhort, reprove, convince, edify, your brethren,—'and *forbid not to speak with tongues.*' But, throughout, his expressions tend to depreciate this gift, and to discourage the exercise of it,—rather, indeed, to suppress it altogether, unless there was some one at hand to 'interpret' in intelligible language the strange, unedifying sounds which were uttered :—

'Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by preaching, or by doctrine? . . . In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding. In malice, indeed—in all kind of wickedness—be ye simple and innocent as children : but in understanding be men.

In short, the impression made on any one, who reads thoughtfully this whole chapter, will be, I think, that St Paul distrusted altogether this supposed exhibition of spiritual gifts at Corinth. He had heard of the distracted state of that Church,—how parties were formed in it, and some said, 'I am of Paul,' others, 'I am of Apollos,' others, 'I am of Peter,' others, 'I am of Christ.' He had heard also of the great display which many made by the exercise of these gifts, disturbing the decent order of the Church, and drawing attention to themselves, as more highly distinguished by the possession of these spiritual powers than others. He had heard at the same time of the great irregularities, the looseness of life, the disorderly practices, which prevailed in that Church, so that even at the eucharistic feast they fed themselves greedily without fear, and one was hungry, while another was drunken. And he doubted very much the Divine origin of these so-called 'gifts': he feared that these ecstatic utterances, these 'speakings with tongues,' were too often the result of mere excitement and enthusiasm, mixed up, it might be, with self-glorifying vanity. Far away from Corinth at the time, he could not undertake to say that all these appearances were unreal and delusive. But he did what he could to check them; and above all, he warned them, in that most beautiful language, which goes at once to the heart of every true Christian, that without charity, that modest, meek, lowly, and loving spirit, which is the only sure evidence of the indwelling presence of the



Holy Spirit, and the growth of Divine Life in the soul, their boasted gifts and graces were as nothing in the sight of God.

And such is the great lesson which we should draw for ourselves from the consideration of the subject brought specially before us by the Church on this day. In every age men have been prone to look for the evidence of the Divine in Man, as in the world at large, in miraculous and astonishing occurrences, passing the bounds of order and the range of ordinary experience. Men have always been looking for the signs of God's nearer Presence in something outward, the 'whirlwind,' and the 'earthquake,' and the 'fire,' instead of in the 'still small voice,' speaking within the heart. Hence it is that, in the traditions of the Church, we find miracle on miracle heaped on the lives of our Lord and his apostles and the most eminent saints,—down even to our own times in the Roman Church,—and many of these prodigies manifestly invented by some of the most eminent and devout of the Fathers, as Augustine and Jerome,—as if the Divine was most distinctly manifested in the life of Jesus by acts of power and might, instead of by the Majesty of Truth, and Holiness, and Love,—Love, perfected by suffering, triumphant in the midst of human weakness, exhibited in acts of self-sacrifice, not wrought for self-display, but in obedience to the Truth, and to secure the good of others, conquering in death,—as if the work of the Spirit was evidenced more powerfully in the lives of Christians by extraordinary visions and revelations, by inward emotions and sensations, by ecstasy and excitement, than by its quiet silent effect in purifying the heart, restraining the tongue, and rectifying the life. The modern instances of supposed spiritual gifts, to which I referred this morning, as exhibited not long ago in a London congregation, and which we have no difficulty now in ascribing to its true source, a deluded spirit of religious fanaticism, had its forerunner, most probably, in the apostolic age, in the Church of Corinth. And so at the end of the second century we find Tertullian giving, in the most serious manner, the following account of a raving enthusiast, which might be paralleled with many similar instances in later days.

There is at present a sister among us, who has obtained the gift of revelations, which she receives in the congregation or solemn sanctuary

by ecstasy in the Spirit, who has converse with angels, sometimes even with the Lord, and sees and hears sacred truths, and discerns the hearts of some, and ministers remedies to those who want them. Also, according as the Scriptures are read, or the Psalms sung, or exhortations uttered, or petitions presented, so from these several sources materials are furnished for her visions. We had happened to be discussing something about the soul, when this sister was in the Spirit. After the conclusion of the service, and the dismissal of the congregation, she, after her usual manner of relating her visions—for they are carefully recorded that they may be examined—amongst other remarks said, 'The soul was shown to me in a bodily form; the spirit appeared, but not of an empty or shapeless quality, but as something which gave hope of being held, tender and bright and of an aerial hue, and altogether of human form.' Dean Stanley, *Corinthians*, p. 262.

Such language as this has been heard repeatedly in the history of the Church. You would find instances of this abundantly in the Journals of John Wesley: for that excellent man, amidst all the good which he undoubtedly was the instrument of doing, has done this evil, to make cries and tears, sighs and groans, disordered vision, and diseased imagination, rank with many, as undoubted evidences of true conversion, true turning of the heart to God, true turning of the soul's eyes to the light of the Sun of Righteousness. And we are told in the public journals that a great Revivalist preacher is on his way to this colony, to call into exercise (we must suppose) excited feelings which are so easily substituted for that steady growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, which are the only true signs of spiritual life. For 'the work of the Spirit,' says St Paul, is 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' He bids us to 'be renewed in the spirit of our mind,' and to 'put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' We are to 'put away *lying*,' and 'speak every man *truth* with his neighbour,'—to 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying,'—to 'put away all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking, with all malice,' and 'to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven us.' In this way St Paul says we shall be 'living in the Spirit,' 'walking in the Spirit'; we shall not then 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.' These are the

new voices of the Christian Life, with which our God and Father will be well pleased; in these utterances He will hear the voice of His own Good Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. In this way shall we glorify our Father's Name, more than if we had power to work miracles, to see ecstatic visions, or dream prophetic dreams, or, like those in the text, to 'speak with tongues and magnify God.'

You will see, however, that St Paul lays great stress on the due use of our powers of speech,—even as St James, who tells us that, 'if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.' Speech is, indeed, one of the chief distinguishing marks of our humanity. A gift we call it, 'God's great gift,' and such it is, but as an essential part of that very image of God, in which man, God's child on earth, was created. The 'Wisdom' of God, we know, is called also His 'Word,' when we speak of that hidden Wisdom as manifested; and so the mind of man manifests itself—becomes incarnate, as it were—in speech. Hence the sacredness of Truth,—that, first, the thought should correspond with the thing thought of, and in its turn should be duly represented by the words which impart it to others,—in other words, that we should first think aright, and then express rightly what we think.

But, though of Divine origin, speech is, like all things human, imperfect,—imperfect as a medium of thought, still more as a means of communicating feeling. When speech is busied with things invisible, with the Unseen God and Man's relation to Him, it can only deal with these great realities by means of their types and shadows in the visible world.

To us Invisible, or dimly seen  
In these Thy lower works, yet these declare  
Thy Goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine.

What wonder, then, if the words—as for instance, those of the Creeds—are but, at the most, approximations to the Truth,—if they contract somewhat of the earthly nature of the moulds in which they are made? As such a process takes place, the meaning they impart becomes more narrow, more peculiar to the particular feelings and circumstances of the individual utterer, less an utterance of humanity, less

capable of finding its way to the hearts, of modifying the thoughts, of all. But from time to time there has been an outpouring of the Spirit of God through His prophets and apostles in different ages,—I doubt not, through John Wesley among the rest,—enlightening those prophets' eyes, kindling their hearts, fusing, as it were, the material with which they ministered to their fellow-men—the mere human speech—by intense feeling, so that the message of the Most High was carried, not by miracle commonly so called, but by His own most wonderful yet orderly working, to the hearts, not of one here and one there, but of companies, of masses, of men.

It was so, we must believe, with the Infant Church. When the first disciples had lost the visible presence of their Head, the truths which He had taught them, the great lessons of the Fatherhood of God, and of their Brotherhood with Christ and with each other, became, as it were, irradiated in their minds through the operation of the Spirit of his Father and their Father, so that they saw, as men see truths divinely-revealed, with a flash of overpowering inward conviction. What they had perceived but dimly before, was now overwhelmingly present and real. Their hearts burned within them, radiant with light, beaming with new-awakened life and hope; and they spoke to those without 'as the Spirit gave them utterance,' with fulness and fervour,—as it were, with tongues of fire. This may have been the real fact upon which as a basis was founded the tradition of a later age, which we find recorded in the second chapter of the Acts, coupled also with the circumstance that in the Church of Corinth such 'speaking with tongues' had taken place,—most probably in consequence of some mistaken interpretation of some ancient prophecy, such as that which St Paul quotes,—

'With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.'

However this may be, we cannot doubt that some such a season of reawakened life and joy passed over the infant Church at this time,—whether on this particular day, or not, is of little consequence, any more than it matters whether Christ was really born, or not, on Christmas Day, or whether we keep the true time of the Easter Festival

or not, about which, we know, there were very fierce disputes for some centuries in the ancient Church. They had 'wept and lamented' for a time, and 'the world had rejoiced:' but 'their sorrow had been turned into joy.' Such seasons as these, as they pass over mankind, reveal one link and then another of that golden chain, which binds 'the whole world about the feet of God.' We know, indeed, at all times that the Father is with us,—that He has not left us alone in the world to do our work for Him, uncared for, unvisited by tokens of His Love. But, when His Spirit stirs the hearts of His people, so that all 'with one mind and one mouth' give Him glory, we feel His Gracious Presence revealed with a power, which is not felt in the secret chamber; for He has made us, human creatures, not single, separate, isolated beings, but having the best part of our patrimony in common, to be enjoyed tenfold when others are manifestly enjoying it.

But, if the Creeds of the Ancient Church are found, more especially in these days of advanced knowledge, to be but imperfect utterances of Divine Truth even for us, who have long been familiar with them, and have had them explained and enforced in the midst of us by elaborate treatises, by catechisings, lectures, and sermons innumerable, how much more must they be for the mind of the unlearned, for the ignorant heathen, the untutored savage! It is true, among the many tongues in which men speak over all the earth, there is hardly one without any word for expressing the great central truth of religion, the Being of God. It is so, we know, in the Zulu tongue, where Unkulunkulu, the Great-Great-One, expresses Him, who was from the beginning, the Creator of all things and all men; and in this language also there are distinct words which recognize the conflict of good and evil within the heart of man, of 'the spirit and the flesh,' the spiritual and carnal mind, as St Paul would term them. Here is a far more sufficing proof of the real humanity of what are called inferior races, of their brotherhood with us, of their being taught by one and the selfsame Spirit who is teaching our hearts, than the traditionary notion of their descent from one pair of ancestors at a period far too recent to account for the immense outward difference between the negro and the Hottentot, and the proud son of Western Europe.

But, although there is so far ground for the religious teacher to go on, a means of communicating that which it most imports men to know, of throwing light upon the instinct, still dim and faint, concerning things divine in the untrained heathen mind, there is no possibility of translating, at least to any real purpose, into all heathen languages of the present day, all portions of the Bible,—much less the most elaborate of the creeds of Christendom. Such translations, indeed, are made; but I think most practical missionaries will agree with me that it is a mistake to attempt to transfer into a heathen tongue all parts of Scripture and all portions of our formularies, before we ourselves have so thoroughly mastered the foreign language by years of continued labour, as not only to speak in it, but to think, as a native, in it. Nay, how even then can this be done to any purpose, when that tongue itself has most probably no words to express a multitude of expressions, which are found in our English versions of the Hebrew and Greek originals of the Scriptures, or in the Greek and Latin of the Creeds,—and when even the best existing Version of the Bible is in many parts very defective, and what is obscure and perplexing in the original has become either altogether unintelligible or absolutely false in the translation. There are, in fact, many portions of the Bible, more especially in the Psalms and Prophecies and Apostolical Epistles, about which the most learned and devout commentators are wholly at variance. There are others, in respect of which the Greek translation, made nearly three centuries before the Christian era, differs entirely from that which is the plain meaning of the present Hebrew, and shows that *their* copy of the Hebrew Text must have often materially differed from ours.

What should we infer from all this?—that the Bible should *not* be translated into English, or, as far as can be, into heathen tongues?—that we should keep the Book shut up from the eyes of the common people, as the Roman Church does?—that we should not let them have the Athanasian Creed, because there are certain expressions in it, which pass even our comprehension, though turned into our best latinized English, but which are utterly untranslatable into the language of an uncivilized

people? Far from it. Much, as you know, has been said about Modern Theologians depreciating the Bible. But the fact is that none are more desirous to propagate it,—none more ready to maintain its wonderful character, to enforce its paramount claims on the attention of mankind,—none more anxious to study it thoroughly and devoutly for themselves, and to commend it to the thoughtful reverence of others,—than the preachers, as they are called, of the Modern School. Only they wish it to be read with intelligent appreciation of its contents, ‘with the mind as well as with the heart’; they wish that in this respect, as well as others, the apostle’s word should be carried out,—‘In malice be ye children; but in understanding be men.’ And so, too, with respect to the Creeds, when we know their real history, and have shaken off the superstitious notions which attach to them a quasi-Divine authority, as if they contained the concentrated wisdom of the whole Church in the apostolic or in later times, under the direct sanction of the Holy Ghost, it is most interesting and instructive to hear them read from time to time in our hearing, as the Athanasian Creed has been read this day and will be read next Sunday. They are the grand historical records of great conflicts of thought in former days,—the venerable reminiscences of discussions and controversies, which at one time absorbed the attention, and excited the vehement passions, of the whole Christian world,—the summaries of conclusions, which, whether the private work originally of unknown authors, or the result of public discussions in the Imperial Presence, by Bishops gathered from all parts of Christendom, have now been handed down through many centuries, as heirlooms of the Church in all its branches.

From the difficulty, therefore, of translating the Bible and the Church Formularies, and the absolute impossibility of translating at all some portions of them, into many heathen languages, and of translating other parts correctly into *any* tongue, even the English, we do not infer by any means that they are not to be transferred, as far as may be practicable, into all the languages of all the nations with whom we are brought into contact upon the face of the earth. But we do infer that the hope of any tribe of our race, its hope of Eternal Life, cannot depend upon its

having a knowledge of the Bible or of the Creeds, in whole or in part,—upon a belief in the absolute infallible accuracy of what can never be imparted to them in a perfect state, as it first was written. We do infer that, when we give to our fellow-men the Bible or the Church Formularies, we are to tell the truth about them,—to explain that they are but the writings of fallible men, like ourselves, highly favoured, no doubt, with light from above, when others of the human race were still left lying for a time in darkness, but, after all, falling short of that light which we ourselves have received, who have been called to read a page further on in God's Great Lesson-Book, who have the results of *their* experience, of *their* revelations of God's Truth, of *their* acquaintance with His works and ways, *increased by our own*.

Some there are, in fact, who, in reading the written word, think almost of the very sounds and syllables as coming directly from the Invisible,—out of the cloud, or out of the clear blue sky,—and regard such utterances as more divine, more authoritative, than if the lips of man had been the organ of the Divine communication,—still more than if that Divine message had been conceived in the human heart or brain, by the ordinary, though mysterious, operation of the Spirit of God. Such thoughts are but a childish way of regarding God's dealings with men, and moreover bring with them this cruel consequence,—the Lord then speaks no more with men, as he did of old! 'What hath the Lord spoken?' we say,—and we mean only, 'What does the Bible contain?' For how many long centuries, on this view of the subject, has God forsaken His world, and left men to babble what they would concerning Him! Yet in old times when the Prophet said, 'Thus saith the Lord!' it was but the expression of his own devout conviction that what was pressing on his spirit, and swelling his heart, was right, was true and good, and that it must therefore be from above. And he was right in that conviction. It is we who are wrong in not confessing that it is the Lord who speaks to us, whenever our consciences reply, and our hearts, however reluctantly, smite us. The recognition of a Moral Governor, not absent, not silent, not regardless, because not speaking by marvels and terrors,—which would make our blood stand still in our



veins, if we really witnessed them, which would confuse our intellects and benumb our hearts,—but speaking to our reason, to our moral sense, by the lips of our more highly gifted fellow-men, even by the lips of the simple and childlike whose hearts are pure,—this recognition of a Present God is what we need to make our religion operative. We need not merely a principle—an influence—a Law; we need a *Person*, who governs all,—a Person, I say, for, though the expression is doubtless inadequate to express the mysterious nature of the Divine Being, it is yet the best we can use, the nearest to the Truth,—it brings us nearest to God.

It is a feeling of this want, which arrests the devotions of many at the feet of the saints, the Virgin, nay, even of the Son of Man. They cannot think of the Invisible God as a Person. An invisible spirit seems to them a something vague. A Presence by no space or limits confined seems to them to be nowhere. Yet, if we think, we shall perceive that the flesh divides, it is the spirit which unites. A bodily presence must be limited; the very conditions of it preclude communion beyond very narrow bounds. It would seem as if the Church of Christ could not expand beyond a small number, while Jesus himself was amongst them in the body. It was after his being taken from them that the Spirit was poured out, ‘and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.’

The Spirit of God, inspiring the hearts of His children with faith in Him, with love towards Him, may well be called the Comforter. How do the heavy shadows, which hang about the path of life,—of doubt, of sorrow, of unsatisfied desire,—yield to one ray of that Presence! ‘God is in the midst of us!’ When we feel this to be true, how is the heart quieted, purified, and cheered! In the Church of Christ this Spirit of the Living God is dwelling;—not however, that any earthly temple, not that any community of men, *exclusively* possesses that Spirit, that Living Presence,—but that in fellowship with Christ, in fellowship also with all who have learned of the Father through him, is the highest focus on this earth of that Divine Light and Fire of Love. Our worship will be but a form, our churchmanship a name, a mere party-badge, if we have not the

Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of love to God, and of love to Man, as the child of God. The simplest creed, irradiated with this, is the very gate of heaven. Without it, the most subtle and most complete, the most elaborate system of Divinity, is but like a vast cathedral, without light or air, cold as the grave, foul as a sepulchre, and haunted by loathsome creatures.

The Spirit of God is called by Christ himself the Comforter. St Paul describes the selfsame spirit as one 'not of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.' And such a spirit is specially needed at the present day. The felt Presence of the Living God amongst us will deliver us from the terrors which assail those, who think that their whole religious system, their house of faith, and fortress of their souls, is in danger of falling at once to the ground, if one line or letter of the Bible should prove to be less than infallible. It will give us power to do the work which He has given us to do; it will preserve us firm and unmoved amidst the madness of men, in the sure confidence that in God's due time the truth will assuredly be made plain and triumph, to the comfort, enlightenment, and support of His children.

In another place St Paul says, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty': there the law of love is not felt as bondage—it is a living principle. To him who has the Spirit of Christ, the filial Spirit of trust in the Living God, the yoke of Christ's religion is easy and his burden light. This liberty is the very opposite of licentiousness: it is a 'delight in the Law of God after the inner man,' whereas 'he, who commits sin, is the slave of sin.' The epistles of St Paul are full everywhere of exhortations to his converts to assert this their Christian liberty, in opposition specially to the yoke of ritual ordinances which the Jewish Law imposed. Attempts are now being made to fasten upon our necks a different bondage—different in form, but kindred in spirit. The authority of Church Councils and Church Doctors is invoked to forbid our searching the Scriptures honestly and thoroughly, or at least to forbid our imparting to others what we find there,—to forbid our searching too deeply into both the Works and the Word of our Father in Heaven. But why is the Promise, which, as St Peter said, was for 'ourselves and our children,' to be con-

finied to the first centuries of the Church, to be understood as not reaching to us? Why are the dicta of certain ancient Bishops,—ancient, but far removed from the times of the apostles, and from the teaching of Christ himself,—to be regarded as more binding on us than the conclusions of the really learned and laborious students of God's Truth in the present day, with all the lights, the helps and appliances, of advancing knowledge?

Let us, who live in the eldest age of the world, keep still the docile spirit towards Divine teaching, which belongs to mature years. It is youth which is apt to be self-confident: and so the youth, the early age, of Christianity, was very positive and self-asserting, ready to lay down its own defective notions as eternal, infallible, truths, which were to bind all future ages. Advancing years, and the experience of many mistakes, teach men to suspend the judgment, to be willing to receive light from all sources, to listen to teaching from any quarter, to recognize the grand principle, that 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.' But it must be light, not darkness,—teaching, not dictation,—reason, which satisfies our own minds, not the mere assertions and dogmas of others; for it is this alone, that will come with living power to us as the Word of God, will be felt by us as the Word of Truth, 'which liveth and abideth for ever.'

## XXVI.

### THE SON DECLARING THE FATHER.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZBURG, ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 27, 1866.

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ST JOHN I. 18.

'NO MAN HATH SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME: THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, WHICH IS IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER, HE HATH DECLARED HIM.'

'No man hath seen God at any time.' From the world of which our senses tell us, with its overwhelming vastness, its mighty forces, its unity in variety, its beautiful order and harmony, we might have guessed the grand truth of there being one Creative Intelligence, one Lawgiver for so many various and complicated, yet wonderfully harmonizing, laws. And our fellow-men, we know, have done this,—men who were not gladdened with the light of Christianity, but who yet had within them the Light of that Divine Word, which 'lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' Thus Cicero has said, using long ago the famous argument of Archdeacon Paley, *De Nat. Deor.* II.38 :—

Whoever thinks that the wonderful order and incredible constancy of the heavenly bodies and their motions is not governed by an intelligent Being, is himself void of understanding. For shall we, when we see an artificial machine, a sphere or a dial, acknowledge at first sight that it is the work of art and understanding, and make any doubt that the heavens are the work, not only of reason, but of an excellent and Divine reason?

And a step further has led men to adoration of that Great Being, who sits upon the throne of the Universe,—to say from the bottom of their hearts, with the elders of whom we heard this morning,—

'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power! for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created.'

Thus Athenagoras, an Athenian Philosopher, at first an

opponent of Christian teaching, but afterwards a convert, has written as follows, in his *Apology for Christianity*, addressed to the Roman Emperors under whom he lived :—

The world indeed is beautiful. . . . But we ought not to worship this, but its Maker. . . . You princes, indeed, build your palaces for your own use. But God created the world, not for His own use, as wanting nothing ; for God is everything to Himself, light inaccessible, a perfect world, spirit, power, and reason. If, then, the world is a perfect instrument, moving in harmony, I worship Him who tuned it, and strikes the notes, and is the prime cause of its music and harmony, not the instrument.

But although from these things we may learn, as St Paul says, ‘that which is knowable’ about our great Creator—His Power, His Wisdom,—nay, more, His Kindliness to Man, and to all the creatures of His Hand,—

‘for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead,’—

yet we cannot know *Him* from thence ; we cannot see that which our souls long for, that which sheds the golden sunlight on our path, the Goodness, the Holiness, the Love, of God. All that the light of Science shows us,—wonderful as the revelation is, surpassing all thought,—and a thousandfold more than was known to our fathers, or to the prophets and apostles of old,—all that the wisest of us can discover,—leaves us still but children at the feet of Infinite Wisdom.

The highest-mounted mind, he said,  
Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

With all our advanced knowledge of God’s works, we must still say with Job of old—

‘Lo, these are parts of His ways ; but how little a portion is heard of Him ? And the thunder of His Power who can understand ?’

But the excellent beauties of His Holiness, the perfections of His Moral Character, cannot be learned at all in this way. With the mere outward vision, with the eye fixed upon the world of sensible objects, ‘no man has seen God at any time,’—has had a glimpse of his essential glory. No miracles or mighty works can teach us these things,—no exhibitions of astonishing wisdom or stupendous power. Only in the silent inner Sanctuary of the soul can we see God, by the light which the Holy Spirit sheds upon

the heart that is pure, and lowly, and loving. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' says our Lord himself in his Sermon on the Mount. And St John says—

'We know that, when he shall appear [rather, when it (our future glory) shall be manifested], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.'

And, though the Apostle in this place is speaking of that perfect vision of God, which glorified spirits shall enjoy in the world beyond the grave, yet even here, as St Paul says, we see our Father's Face, but as though 'through a glass darkly,' that is, as we see an image dimly reflected in a mirror; 'but then' we shall see Him 'face to face:—

'Now we know in part; but then shall we know even as we are known.'

And he says elsewhere—

'We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass [or, rather, as in a mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.'

St Paul refers here to the well-known story in the Book of Exodus, how Moses put a vail over his face when he came from his awful communings with God, bright with the glory which had streamed upon him from the Heavenly Presence, so bright that they could not bear to look upon it. He threw a vail, therefore, over his face while he spake to them; there was a vail between their eyes and the glory of God. But we, he says, we, Christians, 'with open face'—with no vail between—'behold the glory of the Lord,'—not directly, indeed, but reflected as in a mirror, from the life and teaching of Christ, as it was of old from the face of Moses.

'No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him.'

God's ancient people, Israel, taught, though they were, by men divinely inspired, to look to the Creator of all the earth, as their Lawgiver and King, for protection, for guidance, had but very low and limited notions of His true nature, of His essential glory. They might be said, like Moses, while hidden in the hollow of His Hand, to behold the back parts of their God, while His Glory passed by. But this very conception of such an interview of the Divine

Majesty, of Him who 'dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see,' with His feeble creature, who had said, 'I beseech thee, show me Thy glory,' resembles other notions of pious men in those early times, who supposed that Jehovah appeared in human form, and walked, and talked, and argued, and even ate and drank, with mortal men,—as when, for instance, we read—

'Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink.'

All these are indications of the exceeding rudeness of their ideas respecting Him,—signs that they still beheld Him through the veil of ignorance and superstition, though not so dense as that of the nations round them. It was the childhood of the world, the childhood of the Church,—I mean the Church in its largest widest sense, the human race in its religious aspect. They believed and trusted in Jehovah, the Living God; they loved and feared Him; but they knew him only as one may see the boundless sky through a narrow slit in the house-roof. Such, at least, were the glimpses of the Divine Glory, which were caught by the masses of the common people, while the great prophets of Israel, like Moses of old in the story, brought message after message of Truth to their ears, and tried to pour upon their eyes the light of that clearer knowledge of God which had been vouchsafed to their own hearts. But 'their eyes were darkened that they could not see, and their ears heavy that they could not hear.' And even the Prophets, as we have seen in some measure, in many of their conceptions, fell short of what we now know to be due to the Majesty of Him 'with whom we have to do.' To us, people of the 19th century, with its vast and widening research into nature, such conceptions of the God of all the earth,—say, rather, of the Author of all the worlds,—would be impossible. But before the time came, in the Wisdom of God, for this revelation of Himself in nature, humanity had been prepared—above all, by the teaching of Christ—to think of God as a Spirit, 'whom no man hath

seen nor can see,' or as our text puts it, 'whom no man hath seen at any time.'

Yet, although the apprehensions of those of old were so limited, as far as the Power, the Wisdom and Greatness, of the Creator was concerned, they had more light in regard to His moral character, and their relations to Him as a Moral Governor,—a light which 'the heavens declaring the glory of God, and the firmament showing His handywork,' could never have given them. His Word was heard continually in the hearts of His saints and prophets, moving them to put their trust in Him, to fear and to obey Him,—saying to one, 'I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,'—to another,—

'Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Living God, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'

For, though these narratives may not be real histories, though words such as these may never have been spoken by the actual voice of the Almighty audibly in the ears of Abraham and Joshua,—though we may have here only the conceptions of pious writers, filling up from their own imaginations the outlines of the early annals of their race,—yet still in the hearts of these very writers there must have been a Divine Life beating, there must have been a holy trust and fear and love, the result of close communion with God, the fruit of many teachings by His Spirit, which enabled them to conceive such words, as the expressions of their own deep thoughts, and to utter them forth, as prophets of God, in the ears of their fellow-men. His Word revealed to them His Nature in such measure as they were able to bear it. To them He was—

'the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and unto the fourth generation.'

Yet this revelation was preparatory only : it had a national character, confining the special mercies of God exclusively to the Jews, or to those who were in covenant with them, to those, as the prophet says, 'out of all languages of the nations,' who should 'take hold of the skirt of him that is



a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.' Jehovah was to them first the 'God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' then the 'King of Jacob,' the 'Holy One of Israel.' The full light of his teaching, who bade every child of man look up to heaven, and say 'Our Father,' was yet to come. God's servants of old were not deceived in believing that they felt His Presence with them, in believing that they heard His Voice in their hearts. The outward accidents of the vision belonged to their own ignorance, or were suggested by their superstition: the substantial truth was not affected by these. Our sense of God's Presence, our awful joy at His Word, ought not to be less deep and real because it is divested, by our greater culture, of this outward and sensible character. That knowledge of our relation to Him, which Christ has revealed to us, ought to lift us out of the vagueness of Pantheism, while it delivers us from the gross superstitions of the younger world.

Our Lord is represented as saying on one occasion to Philip, who had asked him to show them the Father,—

'Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He, who hath seen me, hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?'

And again we read—

'Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he, that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me.'

Yet our text says, written by the very same hand which ascribes these utterances to Christ,—'No man hath seen God at any time.' Surely meditation upon these words will show us that the vision of Christ's bodily form, however worthy of love and reverence, is not that manifestation of God which we are to look for. He has revealed God by his teaching,—by his own life of filial faith,—by his death in which he witnessed for the truths which he taught,—and not only thus, for others also in different ages have taught the truth and have sealed it with their blood,—but by that holy fellowship in which he bound all his disciples to himself, as the Brother of all and the dear Son of God, that they might also be bound to one another through him, as brethren of one another and children of God,—'heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ,'—'sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.'

This *must* be the true calling and destiny of human beings; because for centuries this faith has been the fostering nurse of all that is most sacred and most true,—because this faith it is which overcomes the world, and the gates of hell, although embattled high, and garrisoned by all the powers of ignorance and selfishness and hate, have not prevailed, nor ever shall prevail, against it,—because amidst all the corruptions, the hideous distortions, to which it has been subject through so many ages, it rises again and again, and shakes them off, and allies itself with all that is highest and purest in our nature, with the highest and purest natures amongst men. The faith of Christ, the faith, which cares for the weak, which reclaims the fallen, which makes us see in every human creature our Father's child, which teaches us that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, which sets before us the cross, the sacred emblem of love and suffering, as the glory of humanity,—how can the Author of that faith, of this pure doctrine, be any other than the Lord and Saviour of men, the dear Son of Man and Son of God, in whom 'the Father was dwelling' by the Eternal Word, to whom He 'gave not the Spirit by measure'? Yes! Christianity is a fact—a fact of the present as well as of the past. No criticism of documents, no discovery of glosses, no sifting of history, can ever disprove it, or rob it of any of its essential glories, as the Light—the Great Light—which has 'come down from above, from the Father of Lights,' to lighten our race. It has shown us the Face of Our Father, the Father and Gracious Friend of us all. And, in the brightness of that countenance, we read the meaning of our earthly life, and the promise of a better life hereafter.

Nothing is more plain in the New Testament than that the sum and substance of it, as of the Old, is not a system of religious worship, not a summary of many and various things to be believed or done, so that 'whosoever shall not believe or do them, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly,' but a revelation of God and of our relation to Him, as that of children to a loving Father. Philip's appeal, though doubtless, we may believe, made in much ignorance, was indeed full of meaning and true feeling,—*'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'* He ex-

pressed the longing desire of his own heart and of ours, and the answer comes to us, as to him,—

‘He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father’—‘This is Eternal Life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.’

We know the Father, if we believe with the heart in Jesus Christ as the Son of God,—if we see in all the gracious utterances of his life the manifestations of the Father’s Glory, of His Goodness, Truth, and Love. Mere works of Power, as I have said,—miracles of Might and Wisdom,—would not have revealed the Father to us,—certainly not to Philip and his fellow-disciples, who all believed that Moses and Elijah had wrought greater wonders even than those, which are ascribed in the Gospels to the Christ himself, and who knew that a prophet’s voice had warned them of old, that ‘signs and wonders’ might deceive,—that a false prophet might rise among them, and might ‘give them a sign or a wonder,’ and ‘if the sign or the wonder came to pass,’ by which he sought to lead them astray from the right path, they were not to hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams ;—

‘for the LORD your God proveth you to know whether ye love the LORD your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.’

But when they realized that all the daily life of Jesus, his life of truth and purity and love, was the welling-forth of the Divine Life within him, that he was speaking his Father’s words, and doing his Father’s works, that he was ‘dwelling in the Father and the Father in him,’ then indeed their faith and hope in God were set upon a rock which could not be moved. The Invisible God, dwelling in Light unapproachable, had manifested Himself to man. They saw that the Word of Life which Christ spake, was ‘not his, but the Father’s which sent him’; they felt that his filial joy and confidence might also be theirs; they understood in some measure the meaning of those words—

‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’

I say, they understood the meaning of these words in some measure; for they did not yet fully realize it, in all its depth and fulness. The ‘peace of Christ,’ in the settled conviction of God’s Fatherly Love to him and to his brethren,—this is that ‘peace which passeth all under-

standing,' which he has left as our portion. It is this fact, of his asserting a claim of sonship to God, for himself and for each one of us his brethren, which differences his work from that of other religious teachers. On the practical realization by us of this intimate relation, this union between God and Man, he laid the chief stress, as the very sign of his Divine Mission, when he prayed in his last prayer,—

'that they all may be one, as *Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee*, that they also may be *one in us*, that the world may believe that *Thou hast sent me*,'—'that they may be one, even as we are one, *I in them, and Thou in me*, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that *Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me.*'

On this was founded that Universal Fellowship, which we call the Catholic and Apostolic Church. It was this which made his sufferings a source of strength and consolation to us, the price of our peace, the balm of our souls. He, the Beloved, God's meek, obedient, pure, and loving Son, was rejected of men, was crucified, was seemingly forsaken, abandoned, both of heaven and earth: and yet he was victorious, and, though dying in the eyes of men, he liveth eternally to God. Then suffering is no mark of Divine displeasure; it is a trial of faith, a discipline of perfection. We, too, each in our measure, must 'fill up that which is left behind of Christ's afflictions for his body's sake, that is, the Church.' We too must be willing to lay aside all thought of selfish ease, self-indulgence, self-seeking. We must be ready, if need be, to suffer, as sons of God, for our own good and the good of our brethren. In this we shall have fellowship with Christ, and with all the elect, God's chosen servants, God's anointed ones, in all ages.

It is well to remember also that the Son of Man has taught us thus to realize the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men, as children of God, not by dogmas and definitions, but by simply assuming it as the basis of all he did and said, as the principle of his own holy, self-sacrificing life. He illustrated it again and again in various ways, teaching the care and providence of Him, who numbers the very hairs of our heads, who smiles upon the children and the childlike spirits, whose compassions fail not even for those, who are yet a great way off in self-chosen degradation and misery. How do all these teach-

ings of Jesus give and receive light from that one central doctrine concerning the Father! And the truth of that other correlative doctrine, the Brotherhood of men as children of God, is in like manner set forth in his teaching in a number of parables, as well as by direct lessons, as when he spake the story of the good Samaritan, or charged his disciples—

‘Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.’

It is noticeable that the expression ‘*only-begotten son*,’ which occurs in the text, is used only by the writer of this Gospel, whoever he may have been. For, as I have told you already, it is very doubtful if this writer was the apostle St John, and indeed it is tolerably certain that the Gospel was not written till after John’s death. Thus, for instance, it does not appear to have been quoted, nor therefore to have been known, by the Fathers of the Church, till after the middle of the second century,—which can hardly be accounted for, if it was really the work of St John. Four times is the expression used in this Gospel, and once in the First Epistle of St John, which is certainly due to the same author. It is used probably in the sense of ‘*beloved, darling, son*,’ as in Mt.iii.17, Mk.i.11, L.ix.35,—in which sense the Hebrew phrase, which means strictly, ‘only, only-begotten, son,’ is almost invariably explained by the Greek translators, *e.g.* G.xxii.2,12,16, Pr.iv.3, Jer.vi.26, Am.viii.10, Zec.xii.10; while, on the other hand, where the E.V. has,—

‘Deliver my soul from the sword, *my darling* from the power of the dog,’ Ps.xxii. 20—

‘Rescue my soul from their destructions, *my darling* from the lions,’ Ps.xxxv.17—

the LXX. translate literally in each case ‘my only-begotten.’

The expression, ‘who is in the bosom of the Father,’ seems to imply that complacent repose in the embrace of God, that utter and never-failing confidence and rest in the Love of God, that intimate communion and fellowship with God, which characterized our Lord in life and in death. ‘The Father,’ he said, ‘hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please Him’; and so we remember how he said, in his hour of bitter agony, ‘Not as I will,

but as Thou wilt' ! Such must needs be the state of one who should reveal the Father to men. And in our measure, let us remember, this will be our state also, as brethren of Christ and children of God ; and we, too, in our measure shall ' reveal the Father ' one to another, so far as we are pure in heart, and true in life, and meek and lowly and loving, as he was, so far as we are faithful Christians, so far as we are ' followers of God as dear children,' so far as we walk in the light, as He is in the light,—for then ' truly,' as the Scripture says, ' Our fellowship will be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.'

But sin, we know, raises dark clouds between the soul and the face of God. Sin brings fear of wrath, the natural shrinking from pain and punishment, which we feel we deserve. And sin persisted in,—still more, a life of selfishness, of carelessness and disobedience,—will make it impossible to think of God, with peace and joy, as a loving Father. How should there be any sympathy between Him, whose Name is Love, and the hard worldling, who lives merely for himself, for pleasure or for gain, who does not care for the souls of his fellow-men, nor yet for their bodies, who never denies himself, or exposes himself to suffering or loss, for the sake of any child of man ?

But in the life of Christ, slight as is the sketch which we have of it in the Gospels, the leading idea is of one who lived wholly for others, to comfort and to heal, above all to bring home to God the lost sheep of the flock, to waken penitence in the sinner, and to assure the penitent of pardon and peace. And, if the history in the Gospels of the life of our Head is but a sketch, it is in a measure filled up by the lives of the members of the body of Christ, of all his true followers in every age. Whom do we and all men recognize as true *Christians*, even though with many weaknesses, perhaps, and imperfections ? Are not labours of love, sufferings for love's sake, the *essential* part of the characters of such ? A Christian may be ignorant, feeble,—perhaps, imprudent ; he may know nothing of the Athanasian Creed, or, knowing it, he may dislike some parts of it, and doubt or dispute others ; and yet he may receive that blessing which the Master pronounced upon the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemaker. But a cruel Christian ! a selfish Christian ! an avaricious Christian ! a vindictive

Christian! an impure Christian! even a self-indulgent Christian!—is a contradiction in terms.

From this universal feeling, as to what is most of all imperative upon those who would be reckoned followers of Christ, and as such would come to the Holy Table, we learn what is the chief feature in the Divine Character which Christ exhibited,—what God is, according to Christ. But, if we look a little closer, we shall see as plainly that this love and care for others, which is required of Christians, which was so manifest in Christ himself, is not a mere kind unwillingness to give pain, a sensitive shrinking from the voice of complaint. It is an earnest seeking their true welfare, their welfare as spiritual beings, the health and well-being of their moral nature. Our Heavenly Father, then, who beholds the returning prodigal afar off, and runs with tender love to meet him, though He welcomes the sinner home with outstretched arms, cannot and will not stifle the penitent thoughts which fill his bosom. His Will is our Sanctification—that we should be made holy and loving like Himself, as true men should be. And how much needful discipline may not that involve for each of us?

## XXVII.

### THE THREE CREEDS.

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST PETER'S, MARITZ-  
BURG, ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 27, 1866.

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1 JOHN v. 20, 21.

'AND WE KNOW THAT THE SON OF GOD IS COME, AND HATH GIVEN US  
AN UNDERSTANDING THAT WE MAY KNOW HIM THAT IS TRUE, AND  
WE ARE IN HIM THAT IS TRUE, EVEN IN HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.  
THIS IS THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE. LITTLE CHILDREN,  
KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS. AMEN.'

THIS morning we had read again in our hearing, by the order of our Church, the Athanasian Creed, which was read last Sunday. And I doubt not its words awoke in some of you who heard it those painful feelings, which the reading of this Creed never fails to arouse in very many excellent Christians, of thoughtful minds and charitable hearts, not because they themselves disbelieve the doctrines it enunciates, but because they cannot bear to join in passing such terrible judgment upon others, who from defects of education or a different training, from the influence of the opinions of those whom they are bound to reverence, or it may be from their own deep convictions, the results of many hours of anxious thought and doubt, which have never troubled the peace, or even the unthinking unconcern and lazy indifference of others, have been led to question, if not to reject, some parts of the Creed.

'Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.'

'This is the Catholic Faith which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.'

These are sentences which many a loving spirit shrinks from uttering against many whose creeds he believes to be less orthodox than his own, but whose life he may know to be



as pure as—perhaps more pure and faithful than—his own, in whose daily conduct he may see the plainest traces of that Divine Charity, which ‘beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things’—that Charity, which is the true characteristic of the child of God, and will endure for ever, when *Faith*, such as ‘can remove mountains,’ and *Hope*, though built on the most perfect form of words, shall be done away,—in whom he can discern the signs of that spirit, upon which a blessing was once pronounced, without any regard to orthodoxy of Creed, or anathema of Council or Church,—

‘Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy! Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God!’

And, indeed, you probably know that Archbishop Tillotson expressed a wish that we were well rid of the Athanasian Creed. And, in point of fact, in the year 1689, it was agreed unanimously by a Royal Commission, appointed to revise and correct our Liturgy, to make an important addition to the Rubric as it now stands before the Athanasian Creed, which would have materially softened the harshness of the so-called damnatory clauses. The Commission consisted of ten Bishops and twenty other Divines, among whom you will remember the eminent names of Burnet, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Tillotson, Beveridge, and Tennison. Dr Waterland, the great authority upon the Athanasian Creed, writes as follows on this point, iii.250:—

There are two accounts which I have seen of this matter. Dr Nichols’s account runs thus: ‘Athanasius’ Creed being disliked by many, because of the *damnatory* clauses, it was left to the *minister’s* choice, either to use it or to change it for the Apostles’ Creed.’ Dr Calamy’s account is this: ‘About the Athanasian Creed they came at last to this conclusion, that, lest the wholly rejecting it should by unreasonable persons be imputed to them as Socinianism, a Rubrick shall be made, setting forth or declaring the *curse*s denounced therein not to be restrained to every particular article, but intended against those who deny the substance of the Christian Religion in general.’ Now from these two accounts compared it may be reasonable to believe that those wise and good prelates had once drawn up a scheme to be debated and canvassed, in which scheme it was proposed to leave every minister at liberty with respect to the Athanasian Creed: but upon more mature consideration they came at last to this conclusion, to impose the Creed as before, and to qualify the seeming harshness of the damnatory clauses by a softening Rubrick.

This proposal, however, was never passed into law, and the report of the Commission has never been published,

and the record of it has either been mislaid or lost, except an extract procured by Dr Waterland, in the year 1727, of the addition agreed to be made to the Rubric which now stands before the Athanasian Creed. That addition was as follows :—

The articles of which ought to be received and believed as being agreeable to the holy Scripture. And the condemning clauses are to be understood as *relating only to those who obstinately deny the substance of the Christian Faith.*

This would have left it altogether undecided what is ‘the substance’ of the Christian Faith, the not holding which would incur the penalty of eternal damnation : and every man would have had to settle this point for himself between God and his own conscience. But it is clear that those excellent Divines did not think it necessary, as some do at this day, to enforce under this awful sanction belief in each article of this Creed, and were even deliberately considering a proposition not to impose the reading of it on the minister at all. It is plain they did not deem its abstruse definitions of such vital consequence, that each one of them must be ‘faithfully believed’ or a man ‘cannot be saved,’—that the entire Creed must be ‘kept whole and undefiled,’ or ‘without doubt he shall perish everlastingly,’—unless, indeed, they explained these expressions by saying, that a man could not ‘keep’ what he had never received, received with the *head and heart*, as well as merely with the ears,—and that, whatever a man has so approved with his reasoning powers, and assented to with his inner being as true, *that* he is bound to ‘believe faithfully,’ to ‘keep whole and undefiled,’ under pain of God’s severe displeasure. And so, in fact, Dr Waterland writes, iii. 244 :—

This is to be understood, like all other general propositions, with proper reserves, and qualifying construction. As for instance, if, after laying down a system of Christian morality, it be said, *This is the Christian practice, which except a man faithfully observe and follow, he cannot be saved*, it would be no more than right and just thus to say, that no one could be supposed hereby to exclude any such merciful abatements or allowances, as shall be made for men’s particular *circumstances, weaknesses, frailties, ignorance, inability*, or the like, or for their *sincere intention*, and *honest desire*, of knowing and doing the whole Will of God, &c.

As it is, however, the laws of our Church require that this Creed shall be read on certain occasions, as on this

Sunday and the last. And, as I then observed, it is good for us that we should hear from time to time the language in which the men of other days have formulated their beliefs, if only we regard them from a rational point of view as human compositions, at least as much liable to error as the text of the Scripture itself on which they are based, and shake off the superstitious notion with which they are viewed by some, as being of absolute, infallible, almost Divine authority, just as if they had dropped down upon us from the sky. This is in exact accordance with the words of an eminent Divine, who has been quoted by the present Archbishop of Canterbury, as a great defender of the traditional views on some points, in opposition to arguments advanced by myself,—I mean Bishop Watson, who was also Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge for more than a quarter of a century. He writes as follows :—

I certainly dislike the *imposition* of all Creeds formed by human authority; though I do not dislike them as useful summaries of what *their compilers believed* to be true. . . . The Greek Church admits not into its ritual either the Apostles' Creed or the Athanasian, but only the Nicene. The Episcopal Church in America admits the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed, but rejects the Athanasian. The Church of England admits the three into its Liturgy; and some of the foreign Protestant Churches admit none but the Apostles'. These, and other Creeds which might be mentioned, are all of human fabrication. . . . What are the Catechisms of the Romish Church, of the English Church, of the Scotch Church, and of all other Churches, but a set of propositions, which men of different natural capacities, education, prejudices, have fabricated (sometimes on the anvil of sincerity, oftener on that of ignorance, interest, or hypocrisy) from the Divine materials furnished by the Bible? And can any man of an enlarged charity believe that his salvation will ultimately depend on a concurrence in opinion with any of these niceties, which the several sects of Christians have assumed, as essentially necessary for a Christian man's belief? Oh no! Christianity is not a speculative business. One good act, performed from a principle of obedience to the declared Will of God, will be of more service to every individual Christian than all the speculative theology of Augustine.

But, in order that we may estimate the different Creeds at their true value, it is necessary that we should know something about the history of their composition. And I think this a suitable occasion for setting before you a few facts with reference to the origin of the three Creeds, which our Church has embodied in her Services,—the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanasian*.

(i) I take, first, the Apostles' Creed, as being the shortest and simplest, and to all appearance the most primitive. Indeed, I suppose, there are very many even in this day who suppose that it is so old, as to have almost Apostolical authority, as having been—if not actually composed and used by the Apostles—yet drawn in a very early age from the substance of their teaching, and introduced in their time, or very soon after it, into all the Churches of Christendom. And, indeed, for this opinion no less an authority may be quoted than that of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, who writes on this point as follows (*Liberty of Prophesying*, i.78) :—

The Apostles, or the holy men their contemporaries and disciples, composed a Creed to be a rule of faith to all Christians, which Creed unless it had contained all the entire object of faith and the foundation of religion, it cannot be imagined to what purpose it should serve. . . . But, if this was sufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the Apostles admitted all to their communion that believed this Creed, why shall we exclude any that preserve the same entire? Why is not our faith of these articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven as it was in the Churches Apostolical, who had guides more infallible, that might without error have taught them superstructures enough if they had been necessary? And so they did. But that they did not insert them into the Creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty as these articles, makes it clear to my understanding that other things were not necessary, but these were,—that, whatever profit and advantages might come from other Articles, yet these were sufficient, and, however certain persons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and only foundation of faith, upon which all persons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was therefore necessary to be taught to all, because of necessity to be believed by all.

And in another place he quotes the words of Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, to this effect :—

'This short and perfect confession of the Catholic Creed, which was consigned to the sentences of the Twelve Apostles, is so perfect a celestial armour, that all the opinions of heretics may by this alone, as with a sword, be cut in pieces.'

And, as might have been expected, in due time tradition ascribed to each of the Twelve Apostles a separate portion of the Creed, St Paul, however, being left out; thus—

St Peter contributed, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth,'—

St Andrew, 'And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord,'—

St James, 'Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,'

St John, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried,'—&c., &c.

It need hardly be said that there is not a shadow of foundation for this artificial theory; nor is there any for the view more commonly held at the present day, and entertained, as we have seen, even by Bishop Jeremy Taylor. On this point I quote again the words of Dr Waterland, one of the highest authorities on such questions:

Dr Taylor goes upon a *false* supposition that the Creed called the Apostles' was compiled by the Apostles. He has another *false* presumption, appearing all the way in his reasonings on this head, that the Apostles' Creed has been always the *same* that it is now; whereas learned men know that it was not brought to its present entire form till after the year 600. I know not whether the words, *Maker of heaven and earth*, can be proved by any *certain* authority, to have come into that Creed before the *eighth* Century. It is nothing else but the baptismal Creed of one particular Church, the Church of Rome, and designedly short for the ease of those who were to repeat it at baptism. Now, when we are told of the Apostles' Creed containing *all that is necessary to salvation*, and *no more than is necessary*, we would gladly know whether it be meant of the *old short Roman Creed*, or of the *present one*, considerably *larger*; and, if they intend the *old one*, why application is not made to our governors to lay the *new* one aside, or to curtail and reduce it to its primitive size, by leaving out the belief or profession of God's being *Creator of heaven and earth*, and of Christ's being *dead*, and of his *descent into hell*, and of the Church being *catholic*, and of the *communion of the saints*, and of *life everlasting*, as unnecessary articles of faith? For why may not that suffice *now*, which was *once* sufficient? Or how can any thing be *necessary* at this day, that was not so from the beginning? iii.252.

You may like to hear the original form of this Creed:—

'I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and dead, and in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body. Amen.'

Again, Dr Waterland says in another place, iv.19:—

The Creed, called the Apostles' or Apostolical, has had a particular respect paid to it, because, by a *vulgar error*, derived from the fifth century, it had been conceived to have owed its birth to the Apostles themselves; though it is really nothing else but the Creed of the Roman Church, and called Apostolical, because the Roman see has had the name of Apostolical. Our Reformers, who compiled our offices, were scarce yet free from the prejudices of the vulgar error that had long obtained, though Valla and Erasmus had before smelt it out. Later critics have demonstrated the fabulousness of this tradition. Had our Reformers been wise enough at that time to see it, it

may be doubted whether they would have paid so much respect to this Creed; so that it is wrong to commend their *wisdom* in it, when it might be more owing to their *simplicity*, and to the then infant state of *criticism*.

Once more the same author writes, ii.191 :—

It is well known to learned men that the Creed called the Apostles' is no other than the *Roman Creed*. 'It has obtained the name of the Apostolic Creed,' as a learned and accurate author observes, 'for no greater or other reason than this. It was a custom to call those Churches, in which any *Apostle* had personally taught, especially if he had resided there any long time, or had died there, *Apostolic Churches*. Of these there were a great many in the Eastern parts—Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, &c.—but in the Western parts none but Rome. So that any one, that in the Western parts of the world spoke of the *Apostolic Church*, was supposed to mean *Rome*; and so their Bishop came to be called the *Apostolic Bishop*, their See, the *Apostolic See*, their Faith, the *Apostolic Faith*, and, among the rest, the Creed that they used, the *Apostolic Creed*, now called the Apostles'.' The Creed, then, of the Apostles (as it is particularly called, though other Creeds might as justly have, and really have had, the name of the Apostles' Creed) is certainly no other than the Creed of one particular Church, the Church of Rome, and is neither so old (taken all together), nor of so great authority, as the Nicene Creed itself. . . . There is no reason to lay any more stress upon it than upon the Creeds of Irenæus, Tertullian, or Origen, or the Creed of Jerusalem, &c., all of them, probably, as old as or older than the Roman.

Thus you see that there is no real ground at all for the tradition, which, as this author observes, iii.119, was—

prevailing and universal in the Latin Church, down from the fifth century at least, that the Apostolical Creed was composed by the Twelve Apostles, and therefore was as *sacred*, and of as great authority, as the inspired writings.

Nor was it generally received in the Ancient Church, as most suppose; for the same writer tells us, iii.196—

The Apostles' Creed hath not been admitted, scarcely known, in Africa, and but little in Asia, except among the Armenians, who are said to receive it.

Nor do we possess it now in its original form, since additions were made to it, as you have heard, up to the end of the sixth or perhaps even the eighth century, so that, as Dr Waterland says again, iii.197—

While the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds have been growing up to their present perfection in a course of years or centuries of years, and not completed till the year 600, this Creed (the Athanasian) was made and perfected, at once, and is more ancient, if considered as an *entire form*, than either of the other.

Indeed he adds, iii.p.526 :—

I may observe that the *shorter* form of the Roman Creed (called the Apostles') seems to carry some marks of its having been formerly

shorter, by its bringing in the article of the Holy Ghost in this abrupt manner, 'and in the Holy Ghost,'—words which came in very aptly in the *primitive* form [supposed to have been merely 'I believe in God the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost'] when they immediately followed 'and in the Son,' but which would appear abrupt, after several new insertions made between the two articles. Wherefore, to salve that appearing abruptness, the Church afterwards striking out *and*, inserted *I believe* in that place, making the article run, as it does at this day, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' &c. This observable circumstance relating to that Creed is a confirmation of the opinion that the *first* Creeds (in some places at least) were of such a kind as Episcopius mentions.

The words of Episcopius, here referred to, are these—

The most ancient form, and that which was used in the first administration of baptism from the very time of the Apostles, was this—'I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,'—according to the formula prescribed by Jesus himself.

And, accordingly, Bishop Watson says—

I am disposed to accede to your remark that whatever doctrine is not contained in the form prescribed by Christ, for receiving disciples by baptism into the Church, cannot be necessary to be believed by Christians.

But even this assumes it as certain that the words ascribed to Christ, at the end of the Gospel of St Matthew, were really uttered by him, and are not rather a traditionary saying, originating with the later practice of the Church, and inserted by the unknown compiler, to whom (according to Dean Alford and other eminent critics) we owe the first Gospel in its present form. At all events, as I have said before, we find no trace of any such a formula used in baptism in the various instances recorded in the Acts, where we read repeatedly of persons being baptized 'in the name of Jesus Christ,' 'in the name of the Lord Jesus,' 'in the name of the Lord,' but never 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,'—which is inconceivable if these words had been expressly laid down by Christ himself, as the form to be always used in baptism.

You now know what is the real account of the origin of what is commonly called—but most incorrectly—the Apostles' Creed. And you see that, in repeating it, we are merely repeating the form of words, which the Roman Church required to be learned and repeated by its candidates for baptism, perhaps as early as the end of the fourth century, since we find it in the writings of Ambrose of that age; but we repeat it also with some additions which were

made to it at a still later time, as late as the sixth or even the eighth century.

(ii) Let us now consider the question of the Nicene Creed. It is well known of course, that this Creed was composed at the Council of Nicæa, in the year 325, when more than 300 Bishops were present gathered from various parts of Christendom, and 318 signed this Confession of Faith. The Emperor Constantine himself, who summoned the Council and paid the expenses of it, presided at their discussions; and, singularly enough, though a layman and even unbaptized till just before his death, we are told that he took a very active part in these conferences, and helped not a little to settle the terms of the Creed. This is the account which Socrates, the Ecclesiastical Historian, gives of these proceedings.

When a silence suitable to the occasion had been observed, the Emperor from his seat began to address them, entreating each to lay aside all private pique, and exhorting them to unanimity and concord. For several of them had brought accusations against one another, and many had even presented petitions to the Emperor the day before. But he, directing their attention to the matter before them, and on account of which they were assembled, ordered these petitions to be burnt, merely observing that Christ enjoins him, who is anxious to obtain forgiveness, to forgive his brother.

You see, *men* were much the same then as they are now, and have been in all ages; and even the ministers of religion were only too ready to accuse and judge, anathematize and excommunicate, each other. It needed the strong arm of the Emperor to keep them in order, in 'harmony and peace'; and it needed, also, it seems, his strong head to bring their debates to the end which he desired, of an almost unanimous agreement; for five bishops only dissented from the Creed agreed to by the majority. It must not be supposed, however, that this represents the real proportion of the dissentients in that age. For these 323 bishops were gathered from the East and West; whereas, about thirty years afterwards, 400 were gathered, at the Council of Rimini, from the West alone, and of these as many as 80 held the same views as the five who dissented from the decisions of the Nicene Council. And so, at the second General Council held at Constantinople in the year 381, there were 150 on the 'orthodox' side, and 36 on the other.



The part of Constantine in these discussions is described by Eusebius as follows :—

A variety of topics having been introduced by each party, and much controversy being excited from the very commencement, the Emperor listened to all with patient attention, deliberately and impartially considering whatever was advanced. He in part supported the statements which were made on both sides, and gradually softened the asperity of those who contentiously opposed each other, conciliating each by his mildness and affability. Addressing them in the Greek language, with which he was well acquainted, in a manner at once interesting and persuasive, he *wrought conviction on the minds of some, and prevailed on others by entreaty*. Those who spoke well he applauded, and incited all to unanimity ; until at length he succeeded in bringing them into similarity of judgment and conformity of opinion on all the controverted points.

Without subscribing to the censorious judgment of a certain heretical bishop Sabinus, who, says Socrates, ‘ calls all those that were convened there idiots and simpletons,’ and ‘ brands the faith, which was declared at Nicæa, as having been set forth by idiots, and such as had no intelligence in the matter,’ we may at least see from this account what means were used to produce the much-desired unanimity ; and we may estimate the degree of weight to be attached to the opinions of men, who, though bishops, were not agreed beforehand on such important subjects, but were brought to agreement by the Emperor’s potent personal influence, either ‘ convinced’ by his arguments, or ‘ prevailed on by his entreaties.’

By Constantine’s authority the Nicene Confession was now published as ‘ *the faith*’ of the whole Empire : for, said he,—

that which has commended itself to the judgment of 300 bishops cannot be other than the doctrine of God ; seeing that the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the minds of so many dignified persons, has effectually enlightened them respecting the Divine Will.

Arius, of course, against whose views the Creed was especially directed, was anathematized by the Council and banished by the Emperor, who supported moreover the ‘ orthodox’ cause by issuing the following decisive edict for the destruction of all his writings :

If any treatise composed by Arius should be discovered, let it be consigned to the flames, in order that not only his depraved doctrine may be suppressed, but also that no memorial of him may be by any means left. This, therefore, I decree, that, if any one shall be detected in concealing a book compiled by Arius, and shall not instantly bring it forward and burn it, the penalty for this offence shall be *death* ; for

immediately after conviction the criminal shall suffer capital punishment.

After this fashion was the Nicene Creed established, and by an Emperor who was not even baptized till twelve years afterwards, so little was his heart really concerned in all the zeal which he manifested on behalf of the 'orthodox' faith, and so little indeed was the heart needed for discussing the great question, which gave so much employment to the intellect in those days, and gave rise to such terrible long-continued strife, to such accursed passions, to such dire acts of violence and blood on both sides, between the Athanasian and the Arian, who disputed literally about a single letter, a single iota, whether the Son should be called *homoiousios*, that is, of the *like* substance with the Father, or *homoousios*, of the *same* substance, as we find it in the Nicene Creed. In the year 324, the very year before the Council, Constantine had put to death, we are told, on a charge of high treason, his accomplished son, Crispus,—

whose virtues and glory would perhaps have been the joy of a father, but for their rendering him popular with the nation, and producing ambition in the mind of Crispus himself.

His sister's son was accused of the same crime, and suffered the same fate; and many others perished upon the charge of being connected with the same conspiracy. In fact, the great historian Niebuhr has given this account—it would seem, a very just one—of Constantine's belief.

Many judge of him by too severe a standard, because they look upon him as a Christian; but I cannot regard him in that light. The religion, which he had in his head, must have been a strange compound indeed. The man, who had on his coins the inscription, *Sol invictus*, 'the unconquered Sun,' who worshipped pagan divinities, consulted the soothsayers, indulged in a number of pagan superstitions, and, on the other hand, built churches, shut up pagan temples, and interfered with the Council of Nicæa, must have been a repulsive phenomenon, and was certainly not a Christian. He did not allow himself to be baptized till the last moments of his life; and those, who praise him for this, do not know what they are doing. He was a superstitious man, and mixed up his Christian Religion with all kinds of absurd superstitions and opinions. When, therefore, certain Oriental writers call him a quasi-apostle, they do not know what they are saying, and to speak of him as a saint is a profanation of the word.

It is no wonder that, of his two sons, the elder, Constantius, favoured the Arian views, and the other, Constans, the Athanasian,—in other words, the one rejected, and the other

adopted, the Nicene Creed. Nor was this Creed received universally at a much later age. In the Council of Autun, in France, held in the latter half of the *seventh* century, it was ordered as follows :—

If any Presbyter, Deacon, Sub-deacon, or Clerk, doth not unrepovably recite the Creed which the Apostles delivered by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and also the Faith of the holy Prelate Athanasius, let them be censured by the Bishop.

Here, then, stress is laid upon the Apostles', that is, as we have seen, the Roman, Creed, and the Athanasian: but nothing is said about the Nicene. And so Dr Waterland says, iii.p.119 :—

It does not appear that the Nicene Creed was so much taken notice of at that time in the Gallican Churches, while the Apostolical or Roman Creed, made use of in baptism in the Western churches, instead of the Nicene, which prevailed in the East, in a manner superseded it. . . . Besides which, it appears from Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, that it was no strange thing, even so low as his time, about 850, to recommend the Athanasian Creed along with the Apostles', without a word of the Nicene. And . . . it is certain that the Nicene was not yet received into the Sacred Offices in France, nor till many years after, about the time of Pepin, or of Charles the Great.

And elsewhere he writes of the Athanasian Creed, iii.p. 197 :—

As to the *antiquity* of its reception into the sacred offices, *this* Creed has been received in several countries, France, Germany, England, Italy, and even Rome itself, as soon, or sooner, than the Nicene.

Yet even the Nicene Creed, as we now read it, is not the Creed in its original form: like the Apostles', as the same writer tells us, the Nicene also 'has been growing up to its present perfection in a course of years or centuries of years. Thus, it stands in the Creed 'begotten *before all worlds*': but these words 'before all worlds' were not inserted by the Nicene Council, but by the Constantinopolitan, about fifty years afterwards. And Dr Waterland adds, iii.p.21 :

There can be no doubt but that the Constantinopolitan Council intended *eternal* generation: but, as to the Nicene Council, it may be questioned whether they did or no.

But besides various other important insertions such as the phrases, 'by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,' 'was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate,' 'sitteth on the right hand of the Father,' 'whose kingdom shall have no end,' none of which are found in the real Nicene Creed, the whole of the last paragraph, as it exists in our Prayer Books,

was added to the original form, except the first clause : that is to say, the Creed, as agreed to by the Council of Nicæa, ended with these words,—‘ And we believe in the Holy Ghost,’ the remaining sentences, ‘ the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,’ &c., being all extraneous additions. And to this day the whole Eastern Church rejects the phrase ‘ *and the Son* ’ (as is well known), maintaining that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone, and so coming under the terrible censure of the Athanasian Creed, which Creed indeed it rejects altogether.

(iii) Let me now give you some account of this Creed, the Athanasian, which has really no more to do with Athanasius than the Apostles’ Creed has to do with the Apostles. On this point I will merely quote the remarks of Dr Waterland, who has specially devoted himself to this inquiry.

Though I do not pretend to strict certainty about the *author* of the Creed, yet I persuade myself that none that have been hitherto named have any fairer, or so fair a claim to it as the man I have mentioned. . . . The sum, then, of what I have presumed to advance upon probable conjecture, in a case which will not admit of full and perfect evidence, is this : that Hilary, once Abbot of Lerins, and next Bishop of Arles, about the year 430 [about 60 years after the death of Athanasius], composed the exposition of Faith, which now bears the name of the Athanasian Creed. It was drawn up for the use of the Gallican Clergy, and especially for the diocese or province of Arles. . . . About the year 570 it became famous enough to be commented upon like the Lord’s Prayer, and Apostles’ Creed, and together with them. All this while, and perhaps for several years lower, it had not yet acquired the name of the *Athanasian* Faith, but was simply styled the *Catholic* Faith. But before 670 Athanasius’s admired name came in to recommend and adorn it, being in itself also an excellent system of the Athanasian principles of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*. . . . The name of the ‘ Faith of Athanasius,’ in a while, occasioned the mistake of ascribing it to him, as his composition. This gave it authority enough to be cited and appealed to as a standard, in the disputes of the Middle Ages between Greeks and Latins, about the *procession* [of the Spirit from the Father and the Son]. And the same admired name, together with the intrinsic worth and value of the form itself, gave it credit enough to be received into the public Service in the *Western* Churches,—first in France, next in Spain, soon after in Germany, England, Italy, and in Rome itself. iii.219.

This Creed is not received in *all* the Greek Churches, and if it is in *any*, yet it is there differently read in the article of the *procession*. It is not pretended that any of the *African* Churches . . . have received it : so far from it, that they have not—at least the Ethiopian Churches

have not—so much as the Apostles' Creed among them. . . . Nor is it pretended that the more Eastern Christians, belonging to the Patriarchates of Antioch or Jerusalem, have any acquaintance with the Athanasian Creed.

You now know that, when you repeat the Athanasian Creed, you are not reciting the words of Athanasius, or of any great General Council, but those, most probably, of a French monk, Hilary, afterwards Bishop, which were first introduced into England, it appears, about the year 800.

Such, then, are the three Creeds, which our Church retains, and which are repeated from time to time in our services, as summaries of what their writers considered to be truths most essential to be believed, or rather to be maintained in opposition to those who began to question them. That these Creeds 'may be proved,' as our 8th Article says, 'by most certain warrant of Scripture,'—in other words, that their statements are based upon Scripture statements and are agreeable thereto,—there is no room to doubt. And hence the Article says that they 'ought thoroughly to be received and believed,'—believed, of course, in the same sense as we are bound to 'believe unfeignedly' the Scriptures themselves, on which they are based, as 'containing everything necessary to salvation.'

But, when we turn from these Creeds to the simplicity of the Gospel itself,—when we see how for many minds the Athanasian Creed, for instance, puts thorns and briars to narrow up, as it were, the entrance into life, in a way in which our Lord has not narrowed it,—making intellectual conceptions, or assents to certain statements, the ground of acceptance with God, instead of a pure and loving heart, a truth-speaking tongue, and an upright life,—it is blessed, most soothing to the heart and brain, to fall back upon such words as these of the text,

'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is True, and we are in Him that is True, even in His Son, Jesus Christ.'

We *know* by the light which cheers our eyes, by the life which stirs our hearts, that the God whom the Christ has revealed to the sons of men as their Father and Friend, is indeed the True God. Not by abstruse formulæ, but by the simple utterances of these two words, 'Father, Brother,' has he 'given us an understanding that we may know Him

that is True,' for all the practical work of life,—may know our relation to Him, and to each other. And in fellowship with Christ, as Brethren of God's Great Family, we have fellowship with God—we are 'in Him that is True.' Through that revelation of God's Love and Truth and Holiness, which is made in the life and death of Christ, and by his Divine Teaching, we have known—we have seen—the Father, and it sufficeth us.

'This is the True God, and Eternal Life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'

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#### THE APOSTLES' CREED.

From the *Saturday Review* of Aug. 3, 1867.

It is strange how little attention has been directed to the origin and history of a formula so universally known and accepted throughout Christendom as the Apostles' Creed. The common impression among Roman Catholics and Protestants alike may be taken to be, that the substance and main outline of the Creed, if not the actual composition of the Apostles, dates from a period bordering upon the Apostolic. It is regarded as one of the most ancient landmarks of the Christian Faith, next perhaps to the Scriptures, as embodying in a fixed and authentic shape the rule of faith or profession of the truth, which rose to the lips of every Christian, when questioned as to the heads of his belief. How far removed is this vague and unquestioning view of the matter from the facts of history has always been well known to those at all conversant with the records of the early Church. But little has been done to enter critically and fully upon the history of the Apostles' Creed, to trace it from its earliest use to its gradual adoption as the common symbol of the Western Church. M. Michel Nicolas has added to his valuable series of works on Biblical Literature and Ecclesiastical Antiquity a monograph upon this highly important subject, which may well take the public in general by surprise. . . .

The conclusions at which M. Nicolas arrives, novel and even startling as they may be to many readers, are clear and conclusive. The Creed, as we now have it, was at no time entirely new, nor was it the composition of any one author or body of authors, nor even of any one period. It formed the final development of a series of changes, the expansion of a number of antecedent formulas, tentative and incomplete. The common root of the whole was the profession of faith demanded of the neophyte in baptism. The earliest and simplest type of this formula is supplied by the case of the Ethiopian eunuch—'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'

With the growth of the Church, the variety of usages, and [the diversity of points of faith, professions of greater precision would inevitably come into use, varying too in different churches.

The baptismal profession had always in it somewhat of a secret formula, in analogy with the pagan rites of initiation. It was forbidden to put it in writing—a prohibition which can be traced till the latter half of the second century. Out of the general accord in the baptismal formula about that period, or the beginning of the third century, sprang the Apostles' Creed. Tertullian acquaints us with it in its most rudimentary shape. 'Credo in Patrem, Filium, Spiritum Sanctum, et in Sanctam Ecclesiam.' Passages in St Cyprian show that the form by that time established in proconsular Africa had been enriched by the articles of the remission of sins and of the 'life everlasting through the Holy Church.' In Africa, by the time of Augustine, we find the simple terms of Tertullian and Cyprian expanded as regards the Son, and the resurrection of the body. . . . It is in St Ambrose that we first meet with the expression 'symbolum apostolorum,' and from Rufinus that we get the first vague statement of its having been the joint composition of the apostolic body. Up to this time, what most strikes us as common to all forms of the Creed is the absence of the article of the 'descent into hell.' The earliest trace of that article occurs in the Creed of Aquileia, cited by Rufinus about the end of the fourth century. Rufinus at the same time is careful to mention, in his exposition of the Creed, that that article formed no part of the formula of the Roman Church. . . . It was unknown at Arles towards the beginning of the fifth century, as we infer from the sermons attributed to Eusebius Gallus. But it is found in the version handed down by Etherius, Bishop of Osme, and Beatus, Presbyter of Aslanga, in the latter half of the eighth. The version of these two Spanish ecclesiastics has the further peculiarity of prefixing the word *Deum* to *Dominum nostrum* in the second article of the Creed. . . .

From these manifold discrepancies, not in matters of detail alone, or isolated terms of expression, but in points of grave theological import, it is evident in how floating and plastic a state the general form of profession remained through this entire period of history. Far from there being as yet any fixed or stereotyped form of words, to which the Church at large, or even any individual branch of the Christian body, could at once appeal, as the standing formula or touchstone of orthodoxy, we find individual authorities and writers using a large discretion of their own in the degree of fulness with which they fill up the rudimentary outline, and in the prominence which they give, for the purposes of the time, to this or that article of the common faith. Even as it passed from the hands of Augustine [ob. 430], the Creed had not yet received the full shape which it at present bears. . . .

It is among the sermons formerly attributed to St Augustine, but now generally assigned to another hand not far from the same period, that we come in its full-blown form upon the preposterous tradition, which assigns each separate clause of the Creed to one or other of the Apostles by name. The entire symbol is for this pur-

pose cut up into twelve articles or clauses. Peter, as we should expect, is in every version of the story credited with the first clause, and Matthias as naturally is brought in to dictate the last. But, unfortunately, the authorities differ as to the place of John and James with respect to the authorship of the second clause, while it is hard to adjust the claims of Philip and Thomas to the article of the descent into hell. In a Gallican sacramentary of the seventh century, given by Mabillon, the full form—comprising the words '*filium ejus unicum, deum et dominum nostrum*' and '*descendit ad inferna*'—closes with the declaration—'*Hoc est quod ad duode-narium numerum apostolorum cum magnâ cautelâ collectum est et credentibus adsignatum.*' The same notion is done into doggrel Latin in a mediæval poem entitled '*Floretus*,' long ascribed to St Bernard. We have here a curious illustration of the law whereby legends of all kinds grow in definiteness with the lapse of time, the fulness of detail being proportionate to the distance from their source. . . .

The Apostles' Creed, as we have seen, is to be regarded as exclusively the formula of the Latin Churches. In the East it never took much hold even in its earliest and simplest form, and soon fell into disuse. . . . In the Council of Florence in 1438, Cardinal Julian, speaking of the Apostles' Creed to the delegates of those Churches, had for answer from one of them, Ephesius, that no such formula was in use in their worship, and that the existence of it was entirely unknown to them. The introduction of it in its definitive form into the liturgical services of the West, as well as its use in other services than that of baptism, is not to be easily traced. Down to the end of the sixth century the full form seems not yet to have been adopted in Italy. The liturgy of Gelasius and that of Gregory the Great contain only the early Roman Creed of the fourth century, and even Alcuin cites no other. The complete form seems to have come into partial use among the Frankish Churches in the time of Charlemagne, one of whose edicts enjoins the use among children of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. It was adopted in Spain towards the end of the eleventh century, when after a fierce struggle the Monarabic gave way to the Roman rite. . . . Bede, it is well known, translated the Creed and the Lord's Prayer into the vernacular. There can be little doubt that by the time the '*Use of Sarum*' was compiled by Bishop Osmund (about 1085) the Apostles' Creed had come to form part of the ordinary English ritual. In the various '*prymers*' or special forms set forth for popular use both in the Latin and English tongues, the Creed generally held its place. It is found in the '*prymer of Salisbury use*' (about 1400), printed by Mr Maskell, as well as in that of Henry VIII. in 1545, whence it passed naturally into the service-books of Edward VI., and has since kept its place as part of the authorized daily service of the English Church.



## THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

At the Bishopsgate Vestry, on Oct. 9, 1866, the following resolution was carried :

‘That this vestry requests the churchwardens, in making their presentment to the Bishop of London, at the forthcoming visitation, to convey to his lordship the expression of their feelings that the use of the Creed, called by the name of Athanasius, is an offence to a considerable number of the members of the Church of England, and tends to keep from the pale of her communion many who would gladly unite on her otherwise catholic basis.’

Upon this subject the *Spectator* has the following article :

Some of our ecclesiastical contemporaries are sneering at a vestry for taking up the subject of the Athanasian Creed, and requesting the Bishop to take any steps in his power to obtain a discontinuance of the use of it in the Liturgy of the Church. Of course the sneer proceeds on the ground, as shown in a letter in another column from the vestryman of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, who brought forward the resolution, that vestrymen are not theologians. If, however, they are supposed to be theologians enough to say the Creed, and to be saved by it, we suppose they must be theologians enough to refuse to say it and be damned by it: and clearly, what a man refuses to say at the peril, as many persons believe, of his own soul, he is refusing to say on grounds which deserve the fullest consideration of the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church.

As to the main question at issue, we need not conceal for a moment that we are heartily at one with the vestryman of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate. We hold the so-called Athanasian Creed, though perhaps capable, like most other things in the world, of a subtle metaphysical defence that might *explain away* its most objectionable features, to be, in its broad and general drift, bad theology, bad morals, and bad sense. Now, as Creeds to be repeated in churches are not meant for refined theologians, who can thread their way subtly between the Scylla of one false popular interpretation and the Charybdis of another, but for ordinary persons, greengrocers and parish paupers included, who are quite sure to take the sense (or nonsense) that seems most near to the plain meaning of the words, it is obviously a very great mischief that a Creed should be especially appointed for those days in the year when Christians most earnestly wish to unite on the common ground of their faith, which seems to some a mass of contradiction, to most men an incarnation of uncharitable passion, and to a few the express repudiation of St John's (which is also the Nicene) theology. It is not easy to exhaust the objections to this Creed, which, if it bears Athanasius's

name at all, might better be called the anti-Athanasian Creed than the Athanasian, so open are certain of its dogmatic assertions to an interpretation which Athanasius would have earnestly repudiated. But its vices may perhaps be reduced to four, which seem to us to have the greatest possible weight.

First, *in form*, the Creed is not a Creed, but a string of precise dogmas. . . . It is much, very much, to make the believer feel that he is not using his intellect *mainly*, but his spiritual faculty of trust mainly, and his intellect only in subordination to it. The Apostles' and Nicene Creed do this. Both no doubt involve intellectual judgments, and the latter even metaphysical convictions, but in both cases the great Objects of faith tower high above the definition of our human thoughts concerning them. The first thing that strikes the spirit is the Divine Person in whom belief is expressed,—only the second thing, and this quite subordinately, the intellectual definition of our own mode of thought about Him. . . . On the strong ground, then, of Creed *versus* Dogma, we hold that the Athanasian, which is purely a logical exercise, has no place whatever in social worship. The very form of it excludes it from a true liturgy. It is not an act of trust, but a controversial statement,—not a spiritual profession, but a feat of intellectual hair-splitting,—in short, a composition expressly adapted by its *form*, not to speak yet of its substance, not to unite, but to divide.

Next, the *substance* of this Creed is—at all events to the kind of persons expected to join in it, and as we believe to everybody—disfigured by self-contradiction and bad sense. For example, 'The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal, and yet there are not three eternal but one eternal.' What the Creed means, we suppose, is that there are three eternal *persons*, and one eternal *being* in whom all these three eternal persons are united; but it seeks out needlessly and scandalously the language of contradiction, and gives the impression that, *in the same sense* in which they are three, in that same sense also they are one. We call this a scandal, because it forces the sense of self-contradiction needlessly on the ordinary mind with reference to sacred subjects, on which mere logic-chopping is scandalous. Or here, again :—'The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. . . . For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person *by himself* to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic faith to say there be three Gods and three Lords.' . . . If each person '*by himself*' is 'God and Lord,' then, as there are three persons by themselves, there are in the very same sense, in which all these words have been hitherto used, three Gods and three Lords. . . . A more explicit assertion of a proposition in one sentence which is denied in the next, in the very same sense in which it was previously asserted, it is impossible to find in any human composition.

Next, this spurious Creed is, as we have said, *bad theology*. Nothing can be clearer than that the Nicene Creed and the Gospel of St John deny the equality of the Father and Son in every sense in which the word 'equality' has any meaning. 'I can do nothing

of myself,' 'I have not spoken of myself,'—phrases repeated a score of times in the Gospel,—are not words asserting equality. He who can do nothing, who has no life, except in obedience and filial love, is not, in the common meaning of the terms, the *equal* of Him whose eternal life he shares. Our Lord indeed speaks of all men 'honouring the Son even as they honour the Father;' but equal honour does not imply equality in the object of that honour. . . . Indeed our Lord says expressly, 'the Father is greater than I,' not 'greater than my human nature,' but 'greater than I'; and 'greater than I' can scarcely mean the same as 'equal to me.' . . . But last and worst of all, the Athanasian Creed is *bad in its morality*. We know that charitable clergymen have pleaded that it *cannot* mean that men are to 'perish everlastingly' for an intellectual error, because it would be so very un-Christian to think so. But that is, at all events to all ordinary human understandings, precisely what it says, and continually reiterates. 'Whoever will be saved, *before all things* it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith;'—'before all things,' mind,—for instance, before '*doing the will of my Father which is in heaven,*' which our Lord makes the antecedent condition of 'knowing of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself' 'Which faith,' it goes on, as if nervously afraid of underrating the magnitude of the stake at issue, 'except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' Again, after the definition of the Trinity, 'He therefore that will be saved must thus *think* of the Trinity.' Do Unitarians, for instance, thus *think* of the Trinity? Do Sabellians, do Arians, does the Greek Church, do Swedenborgians? And are not, therefore, all these excluded expressly from hope of salvation? Again, 'Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and then follow definitions, the rejection of which shuts out most of the old classes of heretics and several new ones from hope of salvation. And finally, at the close we read, 'This is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.' Now, whatever modes of escape wise and thoughtful and subtle men have invented from this mesh of intolerance, we assert that what it teaches, and must ever teach to the popular mind, is a gospel of damnation, and not a gospel of salvation. It damns freely for all sorts of metaphysical inabilities,—nay, as we believe, for sound sense, divine theology, and the spirit of love. . . .

That our own National Church has retained this metaphysical mockery of Christian worship up to the present time, is at once a proof how silently the consciences of men ignore the poison which is offered to them, and how inert is their intellect in ridding itself of what no longer represents the convictions even of one out of every hundred of English Churchmen.

See also a very able and important article on the Athanasian Creed in Macmillan's Magazine for November, 1867, from which the following extract is taken :—

We may regard it as established that the Creed originated in the West (probably in Gaul or Spain), that it was composed in Latin, and that it is *not* the work of Athanasius; beyond this, everything is uncertain. . . . We have no really trustworthy testimony till the time of Charles the Great [809]. What, if the Creed be really a composition of that period? Mr Ffoulkes (in his interesting and impartial work, *Christendom's Divisions*, Part II.) more than insinuates that what we call the 'Athanasian Creed' was one of the numerous forgeries of that unscrupulous age. . . . Believing, as they undoubtedly did, that this Creed was the work of Athanasius himself, that it was contemporary, or nearly so, with the venerable Confession of the Council of Nice, and that it had ever since been received by the Catholic Church without question, our Reformers acted naturally enough in retaining it in the Liturgy, and referring to it, as a standard of faith, in the Articles. Had the same facts been known to them, which are now patent to us,—had they been aware that the origin and authorship of the Creed were involved in the utmost uncertainty, that it was certainly not a document of the first four centuries, that it might be a forgery of the eighth,—we entertain no doubt but that, actuated as they were by a spirit of candour, inquiry, and toleration, which finds no parallel at any other period in the ecclesiastical history of this country, they would without hesitation have omitted all mention of it in their Articles, and erased it from the Service-Books of the Church. But, after having been for nearly 300 years the cause of reproach, controversy, and dissension immeasurable, we are at length permitted to hope that its days are numbered. Our present prelates, or at least a majority of them, have expressed their desire to return to the faith and discipline of the 'undivided Church.' Now it is extremely difficult to say when the history of the 'undivided Church' terminated, and the history of the divided Church commenced. But of this we may be quite certain, that what is called the 'Athanasian Creed'—[and the same holds true of the 'Nicene Creed' and the so-called 'Apostles' Creed']—was never received throughout the undivided Church.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.









